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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab League Ministerial Council Session Ends

NC2103172496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1500 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Mar (MENA) — The Arab League Ministerial Council has asked Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid to contact Arab monarchs and heads of states in connection with the establishment of an Arab court of justice and report back on the suggested statute of the court and the outcome of the contacts.

At the conclusion of its work today, the Council commissioned the secretary general to contact Arab monarchs and heads of states concerning the code of honor for Arab security and cooperation, the wording of which has been finalized in light of the remarks made by member states at the Council's 105th session.

The Council underlined the importance of setting up a mechanism to avert, manage, and settle disputes among Arab states. The draft that Tunisia submitted in that connection has been referred to a committee made up of member states and the General Secretariat for examination and submission in final form to the next Council session.

In its statement on the issue of the Euphrates and Tigris Rivers, the Council backs the rights of the two Arab states involved, Syria and Iraq, and voices support for their efforts to arrive at a tripartite agreement in accordance with international law.

It called on the Turkish Government to engage in trilateral negotiations as soon as possible to guarantee reaching a final and fair agreement that preserves the rights of all concerned and helps consolidate neighborly relations with Turkey. It also called on international financial organizations to render assistance or loans for projects on both rivers in Turkey, contingent on an agreement with the other states involved, in accordance with the provisions of international law.

The Arab League Council called on the Turkish Government to halt its construction of dams on the two rivers without consultations with the other states and to stop the pollution of water that flows to Syria to avoid serious damage to potable and irrigation waters and the environment.

The Council asked Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid to follow up on this matter with the governments of the three states.

The Ministerial Council decided to put pressure on Israel through regional and international organizations to join the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and subject its nuclear installations to inspection by the IAEA.

The Council also decided to entrust the Arab Conference at the United Nations with the task of including a suitable item on the agenda of the next General Assembly session concerning Israel's unilateral possession of nuclear weapons in the region, which poses a threat to the regional balance, and to demand the elimination of these weapons as soon as possible to achieve peace and security in the region.

The Council regretted the continued imposition of sanctions against the Libyan Jamahiriyah despite the efforts and initiatives put forward by different regional and international organizations to find a peaceful solution to the crisis and secure the lifting of these sanctions.

The Council reiterated its earlier resolutions concerning solidarity with Libya and support for its efforts to reach a peaceful solution. These resolutions support Libya's right to get suitable compensation for the losses and material and human damage inflicted on it. They called on the seven-member Arab committee to intensify efforts and make contacts with the parties concerned to arrive at a peaceful solution and to insist on the practical proposal for an impartial trial for the suspects.

Concerning the situation in Somalia, the Arab League Council assigned the Arab League Secretariat to invite Somali leaders and key figures to a national reconciliation conference to be held at the Arab League and to urge the Arab ministerial committee on Somalia to help convene the conference.

The Council reaffirmed the United Arab Emirates' [UAE] sovereignty over its three Gulf islands and reiterated its full support for all peaceful measures and means the UAE may adopt to regain its sovereignty. The Council renewed its invitation to the Iranian Government to end its occupation of the three islands and to heed the repeated calls to resolve the existing dispute over the islands by peaceful means. The Council asked the secretary general to follow up the matter and submit a report on it to the next session. The Council expressed concern at the Iranian Government's continued measures to consolidate its occupation of the three islands and violate the UAE's sovereignty, thus disturbing security in the region.

Regarding developments on the Palestinian issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Arab League Council reaffirmed its earlier resolutions on the need to continue the ongoing peace process, which is based on international legality's resolutions and the land-for-peace principle; the need for the negotiations to proceed along all tracks in a serious manner; and the need to avoid using early elections in Israel as an excuse for procrastination and stalling. The Council condemned Israel's actions, particularly the closure of Palestinian cities, continued detention of Palestinians, seizure of Palestinian land, and continued settlement activity.

The Council welcomed the legislative and presidential elections in the Palestinian self-rule areas as an important step toward exercising full democracy and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with its capital in Jerusalem. The Council urged the world community and the two sponsors of the peace process to enforce the international legality resolutions to the questions of Jerusalem, the refugees, and the settlements, on which negotiations are scheduled to begin in early May.

The Council reaffirmed the Arab nature of Jerusalem, deplored Israel's actions in the city, and urged continued Arab endeavors on the international level to compel Israel not to change the city's status and to comply with the international resolutions in this regard.

The Council drew attention to the serious international attempts to treat the refugee problem as a humanitarian problem, thus ignoring its political and legal aspects. It called on the world community and the donor states to expeditiously meet their obligations regarding the development and reconstruction of Palestinian territory, as this would have a positive impact on the peace process. The Council underlined its earlier resolutions regarding development in the Palestinian territories. It warned against the continued seizure of Palestinian land to build settlements and stressed the need to oppose these practices, which jeopardize the peace process.

The Council reaffirmed its backing for Syria's just demand and right to regain the whole of the occupied Golan, in accordance with to the principles of the peace process and resolutions of international legality. It reiterated its earlier resolutions considering null and void all the Israeli measures to change the legal status in the Golan. The Council condemned Israel for occupying parts of south Lebanon and the al-Biqa', in a flagrant violation of international law, and its continued aggression against Lebanese villages and towns. It called on the international community to take measures against Israel to end its naval blockade of the Lebanese coast and ports.

The Council underlined the need to strengthen Arab-European collective relations, to continue efforts to secure the participation of all Arab countries in the Mediterranean regional partnership, and to ask the secretary general to coordinate the Arab stances in this regard. The Council reiterated the need to overcome obstacles obstructing the Arab-European dialogue, to promote it, continue the efforts to consolidate Arab-African cooperation, eliminate obstacles in this regard, and implement common programs.

Inter-Arab Affairs: League Secretary Cited on Council Meeting

NC2103153996 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1416 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 21 Mar (MENA)—The Arab League Ministerial Council has concluded its 105th session, after ratifying the resolutions of the political, legal, administrative, financial, and economic committees at a meeting held today at the level of permanent delegates. The meeting was called by the Arab foreign ministers.

Arab League Secretary General Dr. 'Ismat 'Abd-al-Majid stated that today's meeting approved the resolutions of the political committee and other committees.

He pointed out that the council reiterated its interest in the important issues on the agenda—the setting up of an Arab court of justice, drawing up a code of honor for security and cooperation, and setting up a device to avert, manage, and settle disputes among Arab states. He added that a specific line of action has been determined.

The secretary general said that what was achieved in connection with these important topics is a major step that will be completed in the coming stage.

'Abd-al-Majid said that issues concerning the financial position and the League's financial crisis will be discussed at an emergency session of the ministerial council next month.

[Paris AFP in English at 1503 GMT on 21 March in a related Cairo-datelined report, adds the following: "The Arab League faces a budget shortfall of 32 percent this year, which would bump up its cumulative deficit to almost 115 million dollars, League sources said Thursday [21 March]. The League's income this year is likely to fall 8.8 million dollars short of the annual budget of 27.6 million dollars because of the failure of some of the 22 members to pay part or all of their yearly dues, the sources said. The deficit last year delayed the payment of workers' salaries for the last three months of 1995 and forced the pan-Arab organization to close several of its offices abroad. The League is already 106 million dollars in arrears from dues left unpaid by members from previous budgets. Four countries have already paid their entire dues for 1996: the United Arab Emirates (three million dollars), Egypt (2.35 million dollars), and Jordan and Lebanon (276,000 dollars each). Sanctions-hit Iraq is the League's worst debtor with arrears of 29.8 million dollars, followed by Libya with 18 million and Sudan with nine million."]

The secretary general pointed out that the council objectively examined the setting up of an Arab court of justice and requested that the matter be discussed with Arab monarchs and heads of states to examine possible decisions.

As far as the code of honor is concerned, Dr. 'Abd-al-Majid said that some states have remarked on the issue and that these remarks will be taken into consideration.

'Abd-al-Majid underlined the importance of the conflict-resolution apparatus, which will involve preventive diplomacy with the secretary general having the right to take certain actions, just as provided for in the United Nations Charter. He remarked that this fills a gap in the structure and rules of the Arab League.

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Condemns Decision Barring Deputy's Travel to Gaza

JN2103152996 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1200 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Excellency President Yasir 'Arafat condemned the Israeli decision banning Legislative Council Member Ma'awiyah al-Masri from leaving Nabulus for Gaza to take part in the second session of the Legislative Council.

President 'Arafat said that this Israeli measure totally contradicts the agreements signed with the Israeli side. He noted that the Israeli Government does not have the right to prevent a deputy who was elected by the people from attending the council's sessions.

In the meantime, Legislative Council members continue their discussion of a number of important issues listed on their agenda, foremost of which are the Israeli violations and military and economic siege imposed on Palestine.

Palestinian Affairs: Ministry Condemns Israeli Ban on Deputies' Travel to Gaza

JN2103153896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1200 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Information Ministry condemned the Israeli occupation authorities' measure banning Legislative Council members Qaddurah Faris and Mu'awiyah al-Masri from travelling to the Gaza Governorate to attend the Legislative Council session.

The ministry stressed that this Israeli measure is a flagrant violation of the spirit of the Declaration of Principles and the Palestinian-Israeli agreements which provide for the free movement of all individuals among the Palestinian governorates.

The Information Ministry called on all world parliaments and institutions to prevent the Israeli Government from taking such measures which threaten the peace process.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Adviser Calls On Israel To Stop Expulsions

JN2103160396 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1200 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Nabil Abu-Rudaynah, adviser to President Yasir 'Arafat, called on the Israeli Government to stop the expulsion policy and all the measures which conflict with the Palestinian-Israeli agreements.

In a statement to our correspondent in Gaza, Abu-Rudaynah said that the Israeli Government's decision to expel a number of Palestinian citizens violates all the international norms and laws and conflicts with the peace agreement.

Palestinian Affairs: Fatah Calls On Israel to 'Immediately Suspend Siege'

JN2103154896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1400 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Fatah Movement called on the Israeli Government to immediately suspend the siege and all forms of collective punishment and adhere to the agreements signed with the PLO.

In a statement issued following an emergency meeting in Gaza, the movement blamed the Israeli Government for crippling the implementation of the final-stage agreement. It said the policy of siege and collective punishment contradicts the peace process and peaceful coexistence.

The movement held an emergency meeting at its central headquarters in Gaza yesterday. The meeting was attended by Salim al-Za'nun and Zakariyah al-Agha from the movements' Central Committee, Abu-'Ali Shahin and Rawhi Fattuh from the Revolutionary Council, Muhammed Dahlan from the Gaza Preventive Security, and members of the Higher Fatah Committee.

Palestinian Affairs: Israel Bans Infant Vaccines, Medicines From Entering Gaza

JN2103160996 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1300 GMT 21 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli authorities today banned infant vaccines and other medicines from entering the Gaza Governorate via the Hanun crossing.

Dr. 'Imad Tarawiyah, director general of the Ministry of Health, said that this measure violates human values and the most basic human rights. He said that these medicines and vaccines were donated by the Physicians for Peace Society [words indistinct].

Palestinian Affairs: EU To Dispatch Food Aid to Palestinian Territories

JN2103215296 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1900 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The EU has decided to dispatch urgent food aid worth $900,000 to the Palestinian people to compensate for the food shortages caused by the military and economic siege imposed on Palestine by the occupation authorities.

The EU also granted the World [Food] Program 470,000 ECU's to import basic supplies for the Palestinian people. In the same vein, the UNICEF urged the international community to extend further assistance to Palestine. A report prepared by the German Committee of UNICEF stated that an entire generation of Palestinian children is suffering from the Israeli policy of collective punishment.

In a related development, France today warned the Israeli Government against the consequences of the continued pursuit of a policy grounded in collective punishment and house demolitions. A spokesman for the French Foreign Ministry said that such a policy would promote extremism and terrorism.

Palestinian Affairs: Angry 'Arafat Walks Out of Self-Rule Council Session

NC2103221996 Paris AFP in English 2026 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, March 21 (AFP) — President Yasir 'Arafat angrily walked out of a session of the Palestinian self-rule council after a testy encounter with legislators here on Thursday [21 March], a Western observer said.

The observer, invited to attend the session, said the walk-out came after legislators objected to being sworn in before 'Arafat rather than the head of the supreme court. "What do you mean, no? What do you mean, no?" asked the president, before leaving the session to the words of the Arabic greeting, "Salam aleikum," or peace be upon you.

'Arafat earlier shouted at legislator Abd-al-Jawwad Salah, who objected to the participation in a council session of PLO executive committee member Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh, who is acting information minister. Salah, an independent from Ramallah on the West Bank, said 'Abd-Rabbuh had no right to speak in the elected council, the observer told AFP, asking not to be identified. 'Arafat responded: "'Abd al-Jawwad Salah, you must take that back ... This will divide us, and it is exactly what the enemies of the Palestinians want."

The Palestinian leader returned to the council later Thursday as it deliberated on by-laws and forming committees, in its second session since the Palestinians' historic general elections on January 20.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas Threatens More Attacks in 'Jihad' Against Israel

NC2203112696 Paris AFP in English 1045 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Jerusalem, March 22 (AFP) — The armed wing of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] on Friday [22 March] threatened further attacks against Israel in its holy war against the Jewish state, refusing to be bowed by a tough Israeli crackdown after a wave of suicide bombings.

"Let the Zionists know that they will pay the price for their crimes against innocent Palestinians, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth," the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam said in a statement sent to AFP.

"All the Zionists in Palestine will remain targets of the attacks by al-Qassam as long as the occupation authorities continue to attack our unarmed families.

"The destruction of civilian homes to end the jihad (holy war) or deportations will not stop us continuing the jihad."

The 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam has claimed three of four suicide bombings in Israel which claimed 62 lives from February 25 to March 4. The smaller, more radical Islamic Jihad said it was behind the fourth attack in Tel Aviv.

Israel has launched an huge crackdown on Palestinian militants after the attacks, sealing off the Gaza Strip and West Bank, arresting hundreds of suspects, and blowing up the homes of suicide bombers and those who masterminded the attacks.

Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres is also reported to have decided to expel up to 10 militants in moves designed to deter other would-be bombers.

On Friday at dawn the Israel army blew up the home of Majdi Abu- Wardah in the al-Fawwar refugee camp near Hebron. He carried out an attack on a Jerusalem bus on February 25 in which 25 people died.

Six other houses in the West Bank and Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem have been flattened either with dynamite or bulldozers.

Palestinian Affairs: Hamas 'Militants' Establish New Political Party

NC2103171996 Paris AFP in English 1621 GMT 21 Mar 96

[By David Millikin]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Gaza City, March 21 (AFP) — Militants from the embattled Islamic movement Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] founded a new political party Thursday [21 March] aimed at waging a legal struggle against peace agreements with Israel.

While Israeli and Palestinian authorities pursued an unprecedented crackdown on Hamas, 450 men and 50 women attended a public meeting called to create the Islamic National Salvation Front under the slogan: "Islam is the Solution."

"Right, unity and salvation is our motto, and Jerusalem is our capital," declared 'Atallah Abu-Sabah, a senior Hamas figure, from the tribune of the al-Shawwa Cultural Center.

The 19 founding members of the party, four of whom are in Palestinian jails and a fifth in an Israeli prison, were all senior militants in the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) or activists with known ties to the group. The chairman of the group, Isma'il Abu-Shanab, is a top Hamas figure who has been jailed in Israel since 1989.

They formed the party amid an ongoing campaign of arrests by both Palestinian and Israeli police who declared war on radical groups after Hamas and the smaller Islamic Jihad carried out a wave of suicide bombings in Israel which killed 62 people and threatened to derail the peace process. Sabah described the National Salvation Party [name as received] as a "Palestinian political party operating in accordance with the Islamic doctrine ... and legal political struggle to achieve its objectives."

"The party refuses all the unjust accords signed with the Israeli enemy which were imposed on the whole region and that don't satisfy the minimum requirements and ambitions of the Palestinian people," said the party's founding statement.

Ahmad al-Sahrati, public relations director for the group, said their principles were based on belief in "Palestine as one geographic unit" with Jerusalem as its "throbbing heart and eternal capital."

Palestinian analysts viewed the creation of the party as in part an act of self-defense in the face of continuing Israeli pressure for even tougher action against Hamas.

Party leaders claimed that they were not seeking to "replace any group." and "welcomed Palestinians of all religious, political and social factions." But Fu'ad al-Nahhal, the party's deputy chairman, acknowledged maintaining relations of "cooperation and coordination with Hamas and other groups to further Palestinian interests."

Thursday's meeting was attended by a number of other senior Hamas leaders, including Muhammad Shamahi, one of the movement's top political figures. And in a sign of the complexity of the current Palestinian political scene, al-Tayyib 'Abd-al-Rahim, secretary-general of Yasir 'Arafat's Palestinian Authority, and PLO executive committee member 'Abdallah al-Hurani, were also present.

Addressing himself directly to al-Hurani, Sabah called on the Palestinian authorities to immediately release "all our detainees," sparking a round of rousing applause from the audience. "I send a message to Yasir 'Arafat — send the sons back to their fathers and the fathers back to their sons," he said.

In all, Palestinian police have arrested more than 600 Hamas activists since the start of the suicide bombings on February 25. Israel has detained another 400. Hours before Thursday's meeting, two Palestinian policemen were wounded in a shootout with Hamas militants they were trying to arrest in Gaza City.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Primary Statement' by New Hamas Political Party

TA2103192396 Jerusalem JMCC PRESS SERVICE in English 1836 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

The Primary Statement of the Islamic National Salvation Party (INSP)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Asalamu Alaykum wa Rahmat Allah wa Barakatu [as received]

We are pleased to meet you today to announce the establishment of the INSP. — Motto: Right, Unity and Salvation. — Permanent place: Jerusalem, the capital of Palestine. — Temporary place: Gaza City — Essence: A Palestinian political party that operates in accordance with the Islamic doctrine as regards the Palestinian issue and the Palestinian affairs adopting "Shura" (the principle of council) in its internal structure — and the legal political struggle to achieve its objectives.

— Defends the rights of the Palestinian people and develops the Palestinian community in accordance with a cultural, social and political comprehensive Islamic perspective.

Principles:

1. Islam is an integral system of our life and a solution for all problems.

2. The Palestinian people, either inside or outside Palestine, is considered as a one whole unit who should contribute in building up our country, achieving freedom and independence.

3. Palestine is a one geographical unit and its case is an Islamic Arab and Palestinian one. [sentence as received]

4. Jerusalem is considered the throbbing heart of Palestine and its eternal capital.

5. INSP believes in religious and cultural freedom in addition to multi-political parties.

INSP assures its independent birth, decisions and that it isn't a dissension or an alternative of any Palestinian movement or group. And considers itself a complementary tributary to the history and efforts of the Islamic Movement in Palestine.

INSP welcomes all Palestinians in their various religious, political and social factions.

INSP refuses all the unjust accords signed with the Israeli enemy which were imposed on the whole region and that don't satisfy the minimum requirements and ambitions of the Palestinian people.

Objectives:

We have decided to set up this party which aims at spreading its principles and objectives through all means of legal political struggle for the sake of the following:

— Committed to our Islamic duty and the common interest of the Palestinians. — Supporting the Palestinian citizen and uniting the Palestinian efforts. — The necessity of the prudent treatment for the critically present requirements created by the inadequate accords signed with Israel. — The need for a participation in the political-cultural activity, the social-economic construction. — Protecting the religious values and human rights including women, laborers and cultural societies. — Restraining corruption, ignorance tyranny and eliminating all phases of fear, poverty and disease.

Mr. Isma'il Abu-Shanab, the head of INSP, is an engineer is who has been in Israeli jails since 1989.

On this occasion we call all concerned parties and societies of human rights for releasing the head of INSP and all prisoners and detainees particularly "Shaykh" Ahmad Yasin.

Finally, we greet our Palestinian courageous detainees, the wound and the martyrs.

Our compliments are to the chairman 'Arafat and to everyone who has financially and spiritually supported the establishment of our party.

Thank you all for you attendance.

[Signed] The Political Bureau, INSP, Palestine on 11.12.1995 [date as received]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Says 900 Hamas, Jihad Activists Detained

TA2203112496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Yasir 'Arafat says his personnel have detained 900 Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] and Islamic Jihad activists, and that Gaza Strip prisons are now full. The detainees include 35 leaders of these organizations, who were on the lists submitted by Israel, which specified 37 names. 'Arafat made these remarks in a meeting with a World Jewish Congress delegation in Gaza.

David Kahan, head of the delegation, told our correspondent David Essing that 'Arafat said the Palestinian Police are making an effort to capture the principal fugitive, Muhammad Dayf. 'Arafat noted in this context that the Palestinian Authority has not received any information on Dayf from Israel.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Baraq—Talks With Syria To Resume Soon

TA2203112996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Baraq says the talks with Syria will evidently resume soon. He told our correspondent Yaron Kaner that the talks with Syria were temporarily suspended, not terminated. That move resulted from the tension of the recent days and the Syrian failure to condemn the terrorist attacks, he said.

Minister Baraq, together with Interior Minister Hayim Ramon, attended a pro-peace rally in the Tel Aviv Museum plaza at midday today.

Algeria

Algeria: Foreign Ministry Condemns Israeli Treatment of Palestinians

LD2103215296 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Algeria today expressed deep concern over the continued collective punishments imposed by the Israeli authorities on the Palestinian people. This came in a statement made by a Foreign Ministry spokesman who affirmed that the Algerian Government is following up with great concern the excessive collective punishments that the Palestinian citizens are experiencing in the occupied territories.

Algeria, the statement adds, strongly condemns the policy of collective punishments practised by the Israeli authorities against the Palestinian people, particularly the siege imposed on the West Bank, the blowing up of houses, deportations, and confiscation of Palestinians' lands in Jerusalem that constitute a blatant violation of international treaties, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention.

The spokesman's statement stresses that this policy of collective repression, practised by the Israeli authorities in the occupied territories, is liable to obstruct the peace process and prospects of attaining a comprehensive, just, and durable settlement for the Middle East conflict. This settlement, the statement adds, is the only way liable to ensure peace and security for the peoples and states in the region.

Algeria: Prime Minister Receives World Bank President

LD2103204896 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1900 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia today received the President of the World Bank [James Wolfensohn], who is on a working visit to Algeria. The meeting was attended by the finance minister, Ahmed Benbitour, and the minister delegate to the prime minister in charge of planning, Ali Hamdi. They assessed the relations between Algeria and the World Bank and studied means of enhancing them as well as cooperation and partnership between the two sides. The talks also focused on the World Bank's support for the economic reforms undertaken in Algeria in general, and the restructuring reform programs, reviving the construction sector and the implementation of social safety net in particular.

Algeria: UGTA Returns to Transitional National Council

LD2103184096 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Abdelahak Benhamouda, secretary general of the General Union of Algerian Workers [UGTA], announced the return of ten members of the UGTA, whose activities inside the Transitional National Council [TNC] had been suspended.

At a news conference he held today, Thursday, at the end of the third session of the union's executive committee, Benhamouda said that it has been decided that the ten members, who represented the UGTA at the TNC, will return to the TNC, except one member on whom disciplinary measures were implemented according to the union's statute.

On the participation of the UGTA in the dialogue and after pointing out the role of the UGTA as an active partner in the political dialogue, Benhamouda reiterated the union's readiness to participate in future national dialogue rounds because the political role of the union, he said, aims at defending a respectable status for the workers.

In his statement, Benhamouda tackled the prospects of the union's activities and the priority to review its statute to adapt to the new situation, as well as the other priority to prepare bilateral meetings which will continue within the framework of the tripartite [meetings between the government, UGTA, and employers].

Egypt

Egypt: Iranian Terrorist Ties, Israeli Withdrawal Viewed

NC2203101096 Cairo MENA in Arabic 0600 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 22 Mar (MENA)—The Cairo newspapers devote their editorials today to discussing every aspect of terrorism in the region.

Under the headline "Russia Cooperates With the Head of International Terrorism," AL-AKHBAR writes that almost the entire international community agrees that the mullahs of Iran have become the spearhead of international terrorism through their support for the criminal terrorist gangs that have spread like a cancer in many countries, particularly in the Middle East and the Gulf region, and through the abundant funds, weapons, and explosives they give these gangs, which use them to kill innocent people and destroy public buildings and facilities.

It says: Iran's hand has been shown to be behind several terrorist operations but there are still some who turn a blind eye and a deaf ear to these facts, which are confirmed by major countries, led by the United States, and other important Western countries, such as Germany and others, all for a fistful of Tehran's dollars.

It adds: Russia's ambassador to Iran, a man called Sergey Tretyakov, caused surprise and even ridicule when he stood up to defend the Iranian regime and highlight his country's determination to continue military and technical cooperation with it despite widespread international opposition demanding a halt to any cooperation with Tehran, which is insisting on continuing its support for terrorism in every possible way to undermine the situation in Middle East and Gulf countries. Iran is helping the terrorist regimes in the region, especially that of al-Turabi and his lackey, al-Bashir, in Khartoum, to prepare the gangs of terrorists and train them on farms that have been turned into nurseries for killing and committing terrorism, after which these gangs are exported to neighboring and other countries.

Concluding its editorial, AL-AKHBAR says: Many international observers believe the Russian Government will not easily abandon its military contracts with Iran's mullahs, contracts that are worth billions of dollars. They say there are over 600 Soviet nuclear experts at a nuclear station in the Iranian city of Bushehr and there is deep suspicion that Russian agents are smuggling nuclear material to Tehran. This is an international crime that must be confronted.

Under the headline "Pursuing Terrorism Internally and Abroad," AL-AHRAM writes in its editorial: With every day that passes, Egypt's security forces are confirming that they have the initiative in the mission to strike at terrorism and pursue its remnants. This has probably caused terrorism to recede and its leaders and elements, who were plotting against the homeland's security and stability, to fall. It then says: What convinces us that this security policy has succeeded is the recent decision by Interior Minister Hasan al-Alfi, lifting the curfew imposed on the town of Mallawi 18 months ago following terrorist operations there. This highlights the security bodies' control of the situation and full confidence in their ability to protect individuals and possessions.

AL-AHRAM adds: The security bodies are working day and night to eliminate and uproot terrorism to protect social peace and achieve security and social stability, which is necessary for encouraging investors to head south to Upper Egypt. It says the security bodies' efforts do not stop at pursuing the terrorist remnants, but go hand in hand with international cooperation to prevent terrorists from obtaining political asylum and to have terrorism seen as a criminal activity, thus permitting the extradition of criminals to their countries so that the international community can eliminate this odious phenomenon, which has spread worldwide like a cancer. Many capitals have suffered its consequences, the loss of the lives of innocent people.

Concluding, AL-AHRAM says: This proves to everybody that Egypt, which has enjoyed security stability throughout its history, can still, thank God, confront the danger of terrorism and the terrorists' crimes under this effective and heroic cohesion between the security bodies and the people.

Under the headline "Lifting the Curfew of Mallawi Confirms That Terrorism Is Isolated and Contained," writer Dr. Lutfi Nasif writes in AL-JUMHURIYAH that one of last week's most important events was Interior Minister Major General Hasan al-Alfi's visit to the town of Mallawi and his announcement, lifting the curfew imposed on it for about two years. During these two years, life in this town, which was the trade center for the central region of Upper Egypt, came to a virtual standstill.

He added: There is no doubt that the interior minister's decision to lift the curfew is the beginning of a new stage in confronting terrorism, a stage that relies on faith in the citizens and their support for the security efforts to contain this phenomenon that has affected the social and economic life of the governorates in Upper Egypt, particularly al-Minya Governorate, where these groups have concentrated their activities.

Jamal Badawi, chief editor of the opposition AL-WAFD, writes an article saying that the Middle East will remain on top of a volcano as long as Israel continues its violence, starvation, collective punishment, indiscriminate revenge, violation of rights, and refusal to submit to the laws of international legitimacy.

The writer adds that Israel imagines that its mighty military machine might protect it from acts of violence. It believes that the plan to combat terrorism emerging from the Sharm al-Shaykh summit could uproot violence. This is a delusion running contrary to reality, because the Arab and Israeli groups of violence do not abide by any law, system, or governmental instruction; Israel's nuclear weapons will be unable to prevent the explosions.

The writer notes that a superpower such as the United States could not prevent the explosion at the World Trade Center in New York or abort an operation like that in Oklahoma.

He says the Israeli military machine could not prevent the assassination of Rabin and says there are many more such examples. But what does prevent terrorism is restoring usurped rights to their rightful owners and stopping massacres.

The writer concludes his article by saying that Israel can have the security it wants if it withdraws from south Lebanon, the Golan Heights, and Hebron, puts away its tools of oppression, starvation, and siege of the Palestinian people, and eliminates its nuclear arsenal. Otherwise, the fedayeen operations will remain alive, active, and legitimate until the last Israeli soldier withdraws from the occupied Arab territories. Their slogan will be the same as our slogan during the British occupation: full independence or bitter death.

Egypt: Officials Cited on Summit Proceedings, Results

NC2103113196 Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 18 Mar 96 pp 14-16

[Report by Wa'il al-Ibrashi]

[FBIS Translated Text] At the luncheon President Mubarak, U.S. President Clinton, King Husayn, King Hassan, Turkish President Suleyman Demirel, German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, and French Prime Minister Jacques Chirac [title as published] sat at one table. Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat's table was immediately behind them. Sitting next to him were Jordanian Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti and Moroccan Prime Minister Abdellatif Filali.

'Arafat was angry about the siege, as if he was asking himself: How can I return to my people without ending the famine imposed by Israel? His voice grew louder as he asked: Does Egyptian flour threaten Israel's security? Why are they banning it from entering Gaza? What has Israel's security got to do with fishermen to warrant their being barred from fishing in the sea?

It was appropriate for 'Arafat to raise these questions at the luncheon. The issue is not one of "flour and fish," but one of famine.

Before the banquet the negotiating table saw heated discussions.

Nabil Sha'th, Palestinian planning minister and 'Arafat's political adviser, told me: The most important achievement of the summit was its backing for the principle of maintaining the peace process and ensuring that it will attain its final objectives. But, because of the Israelis' intransigence, it did not end the siege and the starvation imposed on the Palestinian people. I told them at the closed sessions: You, the Israelis, remind us of those WWII films in which a German officer is seen standing in the center of a French village, shouting: A German soldier was shot at and there must be punishment. He would then choose and kill the strongest and most handsome 10 youths from the village and besiege it for 20 days to punish it and teach it not to resist again.

Sha'th added: Every attempt at collective punishment has failed, simply backfired. So we told them: The war of starvation you are waging against the Palestinian people might increase the suicide operations, because we must differentiate between those who plan the operations and those who carry them out. The planners might have power as one their objectives but those carrying out these operations are youngsters ready to commit suicide because they believe that life is not worth living because of poverty, unemployment, and loss of political hope. Children and old people are dying in ambulances at the barriers because of the siege.

In front of the Orange Hall, where the banquet was held, I asked Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa: Are the Israeli practices against the Palestinian people not terrorism? Why then do we not link the siege with the issue of terrorism?

He answered: On the contrary, we have taken big strides on this particular point and it was discussed at length by President Mubarak and U.S. President Clinton and by myself and U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. Not only this, Egypt even prepared the atmosphere for other countries participating in the summit to pressure Israel, specifically on this humanitarian issue. Irish Prime Minister John Bruton confronted the Israelis in the closed session and told them: You have the right to defend yourselves but do not have the right to punish an entire people.

'Amr Musa added: The Israelis tried to get "lots of words" into the final declaration to tailor it to their own purposes. But this did not happen, because Egypt wanted the declaration to speak in general terms, to be balanced, and to mention peace, security, and fighting terrorism.

I asked him: Are there not fears that each country will interpret these general terms according to its whims and use them against countries, sides, and organizations that it, not others, believes to be terrorist? For example, we noticed that Peres spoke specifically about Iran's terrorism. British Prime Minister John Major spoke about Libya's terrorism. Turkish President Demirel hinted at what be believes to be Syria's terrorism; he accuses it of sheltering Kurdistan Workers Party elements, who demand secession from Ankara. Russian President Boris Yeltsin spoke about what he claimed to be "Muslim Chechen" terrorism.

'Amr Musa answered: The declaration was in general terms. What was agreed on was included in the final declaration. There were no technical or practical measures against terrorism at this summit. These general terms hide no secret measures. If Peres spoke about Iran, Major about Libya, and others about other sides, then each had his own view and the right to speak freely. The crucial factor is that the summit did not name names or focus on measures. The summit achieved a balance among the three issues of strengthening peace, enhancing security, and fighting terrorism through general principles to which all those who attended the summit are committed.

But Dr. Usamah al-Baz, first Foreign Ministry under secretary and director of the President's Office for Political Affairs, was more direct when he discussed European and U.S. negligence in the comprehensive confrontation of terrorism, negligence that later became involvement in supporting and sheltering terrorists.

I first asked him about the secrets of his visit to Israel hours before the Sharm al-Shaykh summit. What is the truth behind the Egyptian-Israeli crisis that called for the visit?

Al-Baz answered: The visit aimed at putting the Israeli leaders in the picture and informing them of the balance that must be found at the summit, in the proceedings as well as in the final statement. If their basic objective was to protect Israel's security, then we do not accept this, because there was also Arab security and the Palestinian people's security. We are concerned about the rights of the Palestinian people and the need to ease restrictions imposed on them. To put it more clearly, we wanted to tell the Israelis: If your objective is to make gains at the expense of the Arabs, then this will not happen, because Israel is not the only party to have a public; the Arabs have too; we do not want to provoke and shock the Arab public. We also wanted to tell them that the summit is not a reaction to recent terrorist incidents in Israel. We are not meeting for this purpose, otherwise we would be shocking the Arab public. We have called for paying international attention to terrorism in the form of a conference because the Arab countries are experiencing more terrorism than Israel. There is terrorism in Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and elsewhere, and the Arab countries are suffering from foreign interference that has helped terrorism grow.

Al-Baz added: We have a general and comprehensive view of terrorism. The fight against terrorism is not confined to Israel. If it was, we would not need to arrange this summit, because Israel could take unilateral measures and contact the countries that it believes can help it to confront terrorism. But if we want to mobilize every nation against terrorism, then we must adopt a comprehensive view. So we feared that much of the summit's time would be wasted in argument and counterargument, preventing an agreement.

I asked Dr. al-Baz: Did the visit succeed?

He answered: I believe so.

I asked: It was said that the Israelis prepared a draft statement and that we differed with them over some words and phrases.

Al-Baz replied: This is not true. The United States and Egypt chaired the summit, were responsible for drafting the final statement, and no third country could present a draft. But what happened is that the Israelis were deeply affected by terrorism; they asked not only for Arab, but for Islamic condemnation of terrorism.

Before I asked Dr. al-Baz any new questions, I learned that Israel tried to get the final statement to explicitly condemn Islamic terrorism, in a reference to Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement], Islamic Jihad, and Hizballah. But Egypt and the Arab countries confronted this and it was agreed to replace it with a condemnation of the recent operations in Israel (this was an American proposal). Shim'on Peres also tried, but failed, to get Iran mentioned specifically in the final statement. He then tried to convince participants to condemn states exporting the revolution (reference to Iran), but this was also rejected.

I asked al-Baz: Did any other differences emerge during the closed session?

He replied: There were differences, notably concerning the resumption of negotiations. The Arabs suggested that the negotiations resume immediately to foil the extremists' schemes but the Israelis had other ideas and conditions. They said they could not resume the negotiations before the Palestinian Authority [PA] adopted a strong and decisive position against Hamas and Islamic Jihad, particularly against the 'Izz-al-Din al-Qassam Battalions. We tried to soften the Israeli position but they said: How can we talk with the Palestinians now? The Israeli people are rejecting this because they say the PA is not serious.

The Israelis also said that after that they cannot enter the final-status negotiations. We discussed this with them and said: This argument is wrong and its results are bad. You must not look at your interests alone; you must adopt a balanced outlook, because unless interests are viewed in a balanced way there will be no stability in the region. I think that was the most important point concerning differences at the summit.

I asked Dr. al-Baz: I learned of another dispute regarding Israel's request that cooperation to combat terrorism should be on the level of the security bodies.

He answered: The Israelis hoped this would happen but we did not discuss it.

I asked: If the summit did not discuss technical and practical measures to combat terrorism and discussed only general principles, why did the U.S. delegation include Central Intelligence Agency Director John Deutch, his deputy, George Tenet, and officials from the Federal Bureau of Investigation and U.S. military intelligence?

He answered: They were members of the U.S. delegation only in order to follow the general trends. They want to learn the stance of the various countries on terrorism: What is the Arab stance on this, what is their opinion, what is the European stance, and how far are they ready to cooperate in combating terrorism? But there was no talk of any measures. No coordination took place at the conference, unless there was coordination between them, that is, between Israel and the United States or between the United States and the European countries. This would be classed as bilateral coordination, which concerns them alone and commits no one.

I asked Dr. al-Baz: Could the Egyptian proposal on the comprehensive confrontation of terrorism succeed and could the Americans and Europeans cooperate in this regard despite Egypt accusing them of supporting and sheltering extremists?

He answered: The terrorism Egypt is being subjected to has internal and external dimensions. The internal dimensions are our responsibility and we will deal with them. We will never ask the Europeans and the Americans to help us combat internal terrorist operations in Egypt. But we also tell them that there are external dimensions with regard to the Europeans. The Europeans show some leniency toward and tolerance of Egyptian extremists. They are not careful about how they deal with terrorist activities, such as conveying messages, delivering arms, facilitating movement, offering shelter, or covering up.

The European countries in particular have no reason to be careless about their security and about ours; they should be firm with terrorists. The strange thing is that they admit that they deal with Egyptian extremists but under different justifications. For example, some countries treat the terrorists like a political opposition. Opposition is normally internal, while the oppositionist who seeks shelter abroad is a terrorist. Some countries use the pretext of pressure from human rights organizations, while others use the pretext of their judicial system, such as Britain. Others, such as Denmark and Switzerland, use the excuse that their laws provide political asylum for any wanted person whose home country applies the death sentence.

I asked him: What about the United States? You once accused U.S. intelligence of training Egyptian extremists and giving them entry visas to the United States. Topping this list is the mufti of terrorism, 'Umar 'Abd-al-Rahman. Relations between the United States and the terrorists continued until after the Afghan war.

He answered: We did not infer or make up this information. The surprise was that we got this information from U.S. sources. We spoke to U.S. officials about it and we confronted them with it. They denied it at first but later said that at a particular point in time they needed to cooperate with various elements in Afghanistan. They did not have the chance to choose these elements so they dealt with anyone. A special and strong relationship started between U.S. intelligence and the Afghan Arabs. The basic problem here is that the Afghan Arabs who returned to their countries continued to have a strong relationship with the United States and its intelligence. The problem then does not end with Afghanistan, but goes beyond it.

The Sharm al-Shaykh summit set out new bases for cooperation. The follow-up committee will meet soon.

Dr. Nabil Sha'th told ROSE AL-YUSUF: We asked the Israelis why they were punishing the Palestinian Authority. Is it because of the presence of Mahmud al-Zahhar and some publicly known Hamas leaders in Gaza? Right, then, there are publicly known Hamas leaders in Jordan, Damascus, Beirut, Iran, and Sudan. They have official media offices there. Why are they punishing the PA alone and besieging the Palestinian people? During the Cairo conference to promote dialogue between Hamas and the PA, the extremist Hamas leaders from Jordan came, Khalid Mish'al from Jordan, Muhammad Nazzal from Jordan, and Ghawshah from Jordan. Those who opposed the agreement were from Jordan. I am not accusing Jordan, but the view should be Arab first, then regional and international. Why are they looking at the youths who carry out the suicide operations without looking at the planners abroad?

Sha'th added: Hamas' military and secret leaders, whom Israel wants us to arrest, have been on Israel's watch list for seven years. Israel could not arrest them under its full occupation so how could it ask us to detain them today?

I asked him: Is it not regrettable that the PA is coordinating with Israel to strike at Hamas? He said: It is not coordination to strike at Hamas, but to strike at whoever tries to fight the peace process using terrorism.

I asked: Will you hand over to Israel Hamas' four military leaders recently arrested by you? I learned that you had a disagreement with the Israelis on this point at the summit.

Sha'th said: We will never hand over anyone to Israel. Anyone we detain we bring to account.

Finally, I asked: Do you consider Hamas operations to be acts of terrorism? He said: Operations taking place while the peace process is going on and that are designed to destroy peace are necessarily terrorist.

Elsewhere, many viewed Qatar's invitation, extended during the summit, asking Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres to visit Doha, as the first step in the new Arab-Israeli cooperation.

I asked Qatari Foreign Minister Shaykh Hamad Bin-Jasim Al Thani about it. He said: The steps we embark on to consolidate our ties with Israel are not related to combating terrorism or any other goal. They only seek to encourage the Israelis to proceed with the peace process with all the parties. We want the Israeli people, before the Israeli Government, to realize that if the peace process succeeds and every party gains its rights according to the UN resolutions, there will be no problems between the Arabs and Israelis.

I said: But Israel continues to occupy Arab territories and is stalling on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. It has been proven that rushing toward Israel makes it more intransigent.

He said: We know our steps and do not allow anyone to judge our stances.

I asked: Did you link the recent aborted coup in Qatar with terrorism, which the Sharm al-Shaykh summit is discussing? He said: We believe the two issues are related therefore we are standing up to terrorism. True, the coup attempt is related to other issues as well but the comprehensive nature of terrorism makes the coup attempt part of the summit theme.

I asked: You have a particular interest in the issue of extremist funding. Why is that? Are there religious and charity organizations in Qatar that finance terrorism?

He answered: I assure you that we were the first to take notice of this issue over three years ago. We adopted strict measures to ensure that donations and funds would not be directed toward terrorist quarters, but would be placed under the direct supervision of the Awqaf Ministry to be used for charity work. We are against linking terrorism to Islam. Terrorism exists among the Jews and others. Religions call for peace and saving lives; we Arabs are the victims of terrorism.

So I asked: You agree with hitting Hamas? He said: I do not say hitting Hamas. I say hitting terrorism, which uses violence and kills innocent people. Hamas is not all terrorist and its elements are not all terrorists.

I have learned that Egypt was not angered by Syria's absence from the summit, although it wished it had attended. Egypt was not angered by Syria's criticism of the summit either. What angered Egypt is that Syria apologized to the United States for not being able to attend the summit and did not make a similar apology to Egypt.

I asked Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa about it. He said: This is something that concerns them; we do not need an apology. Syria's absence will have no effect on the summit's results. The results are binding on those who attend it and Syria has its own reasons and justifications for not attending.

Libya

Libya: Tripoli Reacts to UN Decision To Continue 'Unjust Measures'

LD2103211796 Tripoli Libyan Television Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Under American pressure, the so-called Security Council has renewed, for the fourteenth time, the unjust measures imposed on the Great Jamahiriyah. This came at an unofficial meeting held by the council this morning to review these measures. The council failed as usual to arrive at a presidential statement [as heard] due to differences in views between the non-aligned group, Russia, and China on the one hand, and the three Western states on the other hand.

The delegates of Russia, China, and the non-aligned group have lauded the civilized position of the Great Jamahiriyah in dealing with Security Council Resolution 731, and they stressed that the Security Council statement should welcome this positive position. A statement made by the Egyptian delegate, on behalf of the non-aligned group, reiterates the support of the non-aligned group to the proposal made by the Arab League to resolve the crisis between the Great Jamahiriyah and the Western states.

The renewing by the so-called Security Council of the unjust measures imposed on the Great Jamahiriyah has not come as a surprise to the Libyan Arab people because the latter knows that this council is under American hegemony, and everything emanating from it is regarded as pure American point of view. This renewal of the unjust measures against the Great Jamahiriyah is a call for the peoples of the world to the need to confront this American domination over the so-called Security

Council so that the latter may become a genuine UN Security Council, and not a council that is subservient to America as it now stands. For, at a time when the position of the Great Jamahiriyah is enjoying the support of Russia, China and the non-aligned movement which, between them, represent the majority of the population of the world, why should America be able to impose a decision on the council, that is in contradiction with the viewpoint of the majority of the UN member states.

Morocco

Morocco: World Bank President Optimistic on Economy

LD2103164696 Rabat MAP in English
1346 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rabat, Mar. 21 (MAP) — President of the World Bank, James D. Wolfensohn voiced "optimism" over Morocco's economic future, saying the kingdom is poised to face up European countries' competition. Speaking at a news conference, Wednesday evening, at the end of a visit to Morocco, part of a tour in North Africa and the Middle East, the WB president said despite effects of long drought, Morocco's economy was progressing. The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) might increase following this year's rainfall, he added.

James D. Wolfensohn, however, deemed it necessary for Moroccan enterprises to improve their skill and competitiveness to be able to face up challenges. He called on Moroccans to meet such a challenge by focusing on two main approaches. "First, every effort must be made to ensure the development of a dynamic private sector, and second, all Moroccans must participate and benefit from the development process".

"Ensuring the development of a dynamic private sector will require maintaining macro-economic stability, along with developing financial markets to stimulate savings and increase access to capital, Wolfensohn explained.

The WB president also called on Moroccans to improve education and technical and professional training saying that in order to achieve further integration of the people in the development process, progress toward universal access to primary education is vital.

On the estimated 22 billion dollar external debt and the 11 billion dollar internal debt of Morocco, the WB president said he had received in Moroccan officials and economic operators a firm willingness to tackle this issue notably through [word indistinct] and financial assistance to be provided by the bank.

Wolfensohn, who was received by King Hassan II of Morocco and who met with representatives from the world of finance, said he was confident in the future of relations of partnership between Morocco and his bank. "Our relations are strong and will become stronger in the future", he said, before describing as successful the structural adjustment program carried out by the Moroccan government.

The WB president, who wound up Wednesday a three day visit to Morocco, visited a number of [word indistinct] projects. The visit, the first-ever paid to Morocco by James D. Wolfensohn as president of the World Bank, occurs few months after the publishing by this institution of an "alarming" report on the economic, administrative and educational [words indistinct].

The report was made public by King Hassan II at the opening last october of the fall session of the Moroccan House of Representatives (parliament). In his speech, the Moroccan sovereign called on Moroccans to exert more efforts to improve these three sectors. After Morocco, the WB will visit Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt and Jordan.

Sudan

Sudan: Military Reinforcements Said Sent to Border With Ethiopia

NC2103134796 Cairo MENA in English
1329 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Nairobi, March 21 (MENA) — Sudan has recently sent new military enforcements to the borders with Ethiopia, news reports said here today.

The amassing of 12,000 Sudanese forces to the border region would create a state of tension at the Sudanese-Ethiopian borders, reports added. The reinforcements included offensive formations, equipped with armoured vehicles and helicopters.

Sudan: Rebels Launch Attack Along Ethiopian Border

NC2103215696 Paris AFP in English
1726 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, March 21 (AFP) — South Sudanese rebels have launched their first offensive against government troops along the border with Ethiopia since 1991, a rebel spokesman here said on Thursday [21 March].

The Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA)'s spokesman Daniel Kodi said his group had taken the Khaw Yabus army garrison in Sudan's Blue Nile state in an offensive launched on Monday. "We attacked with about 600 troops and took the garrison of 700-1,000 soldiers completely by surprise" before taking the "strategic village," Kodi told AFP.

Fighting continued Thursday morning at the nearby Shali al-Fil village near the Ethiopian border in Blue Nile state, 500 kilometers (300 miles) southeast of Khartoum, he said. Kodi said the SPLA delayed its offensive until after the March 6-17 general elections so President 'Umar al-Bashir "could not say we obstructed voters from going to the polls. We wanted to show how elections were a failure."

The operation was the first by SPLA troops near Ethiopian territory since President Meles Zenawi cut ties with the rebels after he came to power in Addis Ababa in 1991. The offensive did not originate from Ethiopian territory, although Blue Nile residents who had earlier fled into Sudanese refugee camps in Ethiopia returned to participate in the attack, Kodi said. "There has been no direct aid by Ethiopia," said Kodi.

The offensive, led by SPLA commander Maliek Agar and John Kong Nyon, "included residents of Blue Nile and members of the Nuer tribe, which lives on both sides of the border," Kodi said.

The SPLA did not control territory in Blue Nile before the attack, but its troops in the area "had been performing sabotage operations in a guerrilla fashion since August."

"Contacts have been made between the SPLA and Addis Ababa since last year but so far no concrete results have emerged. But we always hope for support from Ethiopia, as from all countries," Kodi said. Addis Ababa threw out SPLA fighters in its territory in 1991, but ties with rebels "have improved" after relations between Ethiopia and Sudan soured last year, Kodi said.

Ethiopia accuses Khartoum of harboring three Moslem militants suspected in an attempt to kill Egypt's President Husni Mubarak in Addis Ababa in June.

The SPLA, led by John Garang, is the main militia of mostly Christian and animist rebels waging a 12-year civil war to end domination of the south by the mostly Moslem north.

Sudan: Garang Forces Attack Sudanese Army in Blue Nile Province

MM2103151996 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic
21 Mar 96 p 1

[Report by Nizar Daw-al-Na'im in London: "Sudan: New Rebel Attacks in Border Region With Ethiopia"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Sudanese People's Liberation Movement [SPLM] led by Colonel John Garang announced yesterday that it has launched an attack on the Sudanese Army's positions in the Blue Nile province, along the border with Ethiopia, in the first operation since [former] President Meles Zenawi's government expelled the Sudanese rebels from Ethiopia, upon seizing power in May 1991.

A statement issued by the SPLM, and of which AL-HAYAH received a copy yesterday, said that that the SPLM has launched operation "black fox" and captured the Khoriabus [name as transliterated] region, some 25 miles south of Kurmuk, on the Ethiopian-Sudanese border. It added that the government forces were "surprised by the attack" and could not repel it. The importance of the attack stems from the fact that it means a shift in the battles from south to east Sudan. Garang's movement enjoyed ample military facilities during the time of former Ethiopian President Mengitsu Haile Mariam, but lost this potential after his fall.

Ethiopian-Sudanese relations became very tense after the assassination attempt on President Husni Mubarak by members of the Islamic Group in Egypt last June. Press reports said that Addis Ababa has given back to Garang his former camps in the border area with Sudan and given him facilities.

The SPLM's statement explained that fighting is still going on in the areas of Shali al-Fil, Maban [name as transliterated], and Fashimi [name as transliterated], south of the Blue Nile. It added that the SPLM mounted its new attack after the presidential elections, whose results are expected to be announced today, so that "President 'Umar al-Bashir does not put the blame of their failure on the SPLM's forces."

It added that Commander Malik Aghar [name as transliterated] and Commander John Garang are leading the operation. Garang had confirmed to AL-HAYAH that Aghar is leading his forces south of the Blue Nile.

Sudan: Al-Turabi Interviewed on Parliamentary Election Victory

AB2103202096 London BBC World Service
in English 1705 GMT 21 Mar 96

[From the "Focus on Africa" program]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The final official results of Sudan's elections for a president and a new assembly will not be released until tomorrow, but already it is clear that there will be no surprises. Even the report that the minister of culture and information, 'Abd-al-Basit Sabdarat, had lost his seat turned out to be inaccurate, so no surprise there. And, no surprise that the incumbent president, General 'Umar al-Bashir, will be reelected president, nor that the parliament will be packed with

Islamic fundamentalists among them the man frequently cited as the power behind the throne: Hasan al-Turabi. He duly won his seat in parliament, and there are some who suggest that he might be offered senior positions. On the line to Khartoum, Mary Harper asked Hasan al-Turabi how he was celebrating his election victory.

[Begin recording] [al-Turabi] Well, actually, partly, people have been coming to my house by [chuckle] thousands, actually, and my neighbors have been nice to contribute to me by building a huge tent in an open area across from my door. And, so, I have been receiving children, women, men, and trying to address them. In the coming weeks, perhaps, I will be addressing in rallies, I mean, different sectors of my constituency. And, I will have to maintain that contact, so that I could sense, actually, the trends of public opinion, because I am there to represent them, not once and for all, but continuously to draw from them some inspiration.

[Harper] So, what are you planning to do in parliament? Are you going to try to increase the amount of Islamic passion in the assembly?

[Al-Turabi] Parliaments, of course, are not scenes of passion. They are scenes of wisdom, and I have always been saying that I won't take an executive post anymore, because I have served as minister three times, and I am not of very old age yet, I mean, by European standards. But, in a community like the Sudan, I mean, the new generation should be allowed to take their positions of leadership and executive office. So, in parliament, there will be a lot of work, I mean, it requires a lot of wisdom and deliberation.

[Harper] So, is that your role, to inject the wisdom of a wise old man?

[Al-Turabi] [chuckle] At least, it is not a very old or wise, experienced man, I mean...

[Harper, interrupting] But, Dr. Turabi, some people might be a little bit surprised to see you back in parliament, because in recent years you have been taking more of a sort of spiritual role. Even though you have continued to have great power in Sudan, you say that you don't really have political ambitions anymore?

[Al-Turabi] Oh, yes, you know, Islam is a way of life, and I don't want to resign [chuckle] in my solitary confinement. In tradition, of course, many Muslims have done that. It is like the monasteries, actually, among Christians, but I prefer till the end to appear in all aspects of life, generally. [end recording]

Qatar

Qatar: Muslim Figure Defends Hamas 'Jihad' Operations

JN2103181996 Amman AL-SABIL in Arabic 19-25 Mar 96 p 8

[FBIS Translated Excerpts] His Eminence Dr. Yusuf al-Qardawi, a leading Islamic figure, says that the operations by the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas against the Israelis in Palestine are acts of jihad for the sake of God and not terrorist acts. Those who were killed in these operations are martyrs and not people who commit suicide. He said that the Israelis usurped Palestine, killed its people, and displaced those who stayed. Therefore fighting them is a must to protect land and honor.

Al-Qardawi pointed out that labelling the martyrdom-seeking operations by Hamas members as terrorist acts is deception, a falsification of Islamic concepts, and a cancellation of the Islamic duty of Jihad. He said that the subjects of any occupied Islamic land have the right to defend their land and to struggle for regaining it, and those who die for this purpose are martyrs. Al-Qardawi cautioned against falling victim to the Jewish media's attempt to judaize the Muslim mentality by obliterating facts and falsifying realities.

He noted that the Muslims possess a deadly weapon that the Jews cannot get hold of; namely, the human faith bombs, which are more lethal than the Israeli nuclear arsenal.

Al-Qardawi was commenting on the martyrdom-seeking operations by Hamas in Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, and Ashqelon in his Friday sermon in the 'Umar Bin-al-Khattab mosque in Qatar on 8 March and which Qatari television carried live. [passage omitted]

Al-Qardawi said: Why are these operations now terrorist operations while in the past they were jihad operations? Why did we used to speak of the heroes of the intifadah and consider those killed as martyrs? Why did we used to praise God by saying Allah Akbar after every commando operation?

At the time, no one said that such operations are terrorist acts that kill civilians. We used to say that all the Israeli society is a military society because both men and women are soldiers in the Israeli army who are summoned when they are needed. Therefore, they are not civilians, and killing them is permitted by Islamic law.

We ask: What changed our position? They say: The peace agreement. I ask them: Have we achieved minimum peace, or even less than that? Peace has not been achieved yet, and Jerusalem was not returned to the Muslims. The Jews brazenly announce that Jerusalem is their eternal capital. They continue to usurp Palestinian lands by violence and force. We see with our own eyes on television how our Palestinian brothers—men, women, and children—cling to their land and cry out for help. But the cruel Israeli bulldozers shovel away the land with its owners.

Hamas wanted a truce and announced this. However, the Israelis ignored this and killed martyr Yahya 'Ayyash just as they killed martyr Fathi al-Shaqaqi before him and threatened many others. Therefore, Hamas members wanted to avenge themselves and their martyrs.

Why should the Israelis be allowed to kill whoever they want and not have their acts described as terrorism, but when Hamas members avenge their martyrs they are called terrorists? The biggest terrorist in the world is Israel. It has always been so, even before it became a state. It was Israel which began the guerilla war, and remains the biggest terrorist even after it became a state. [passage omitted]

Yemen

Yemen: President Salih Issues 1996 Budget Law

JN2203071896 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 21 Mar 96

["Text" of Law No. 19 for 1996 "consolidating the state general budget with the economic sector budget and the independent and supplementary budgets for fiscal year 1996," issued by Yemeni President Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih on 21 March — read by announcer]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of people. The president of the republic, having examined the Constitution of the Republic of Yemen and Financial Law No. 8 for 1990, and following the endorsement of the House of Representatives, issued the following law:

Article 1:

A. The revenues of the state general budget for fiscal year 1996 are estimated at 155,886,293,000 riyals in accordance with the attached Schedule A.

B. The expenditures of the state general budget for fiscal year 1996 are estimated at 181,415,661,000 riyals as shown in Schedule B attached herewith.

C. The total deficit of the state general budget for fiscal year 1996 is estimated at 25,529,368,000 riyals.

Article 2:

A. The aggregate appropriations of the budgets of the public sector productive units for fiscal year 1996 are estimated at 147,713,863,000 riyals.

B. The total surplus from the current activities of the public sector productive units for fiscal year 1996 is estimated at 25,549,293,000 riyals. The government's share of this total surplus is estimated at 15,954,383,000 riyals.

C. The deficit in the current activities of the public sector productive units for fiscal year 1996 is estimated at 1,128,637,000 riyals. This figure includes the amount of 293,455,000 riyals, which is a current state subsidy for the productive sector.

D. The government's capital share of the budgets of the productive sectors for fiscal year 1996 is estimated at 5,487,346,000 riyals as shown in Schedule C attached herewith.

Article 3:

A. The projected overall appropriations for the budgets of the public sector units for fiscal year 1996 are estimated at 15,767,574,000 riyals.

B. The projected overall surplus from the current activities of the public sector services units for fiscal year 1996 is estimated at 1,452,329,000 riyals. The government's share from this overall surplus stands at 691,309,000 riyals.

C. The deficit in the current activities of the public sector service units for fiscal year 1996 stands at 2,410,967,000 riyals. Subsidies totaling 2,370,925,000 riyals will be offered to reduce this deficit.

D. The subsidies to be extended to faltering units which are expected to experience deficits or shutdowns in fiscal year 1996 are estimated to total 180 million riyals.

E. The government's contributions to the budgets of the public sector services units for fiscal year 1996 are estimated at 3,791,201,000 riyals.

Article 4:

A. The aggregate appropriations for the mixed sector units for fiscal year 1996 are estimated at 23,134,844,000 riyals.

C. [as heard] The aggregate surplus from the current activities of the mixed sector units for fiscal year 1996 is estimated at 3,148,086,000 riyals. The projected government share of this surplus stands at 372,293,000 riyals. The government's contributions to the capital of the mixed sector units stand at 2,500,000 riyals.

Article 5:

The revenues and expenditure of the awqaf sector in the Ministry of Awqaf and Guidance for the fiscal year 1996 are estimated at 256 million riyals.

The revenues and expenditure of the General Authority for Insurance and Salaries for the fiscal year 1996 are estimated at 8,343,100,000 riyals.

C. [as heard] The revenues and expenditure of the General Authority for Social Security for the fiscal year 1996 are estimated at 1,329,537,000 riyals.

Article 6:

The special notes listed in the general budget, the budgets of the economic sector units, and the supplementary and independent budgets are considered an integral part of the provisions of this law. They have the power of the law and must be implemented.

Article 7:

All financial transactions, collection of estimated revenues, and spending in accordance with this law are governed by the provisions of the Financial Law No. 8 of 1990, by its executive regulations, and the valid laws and regulations.

Article 8:

The executive instructions for this law, issued by the Council of Ministers, shall not conflict with the provisions of this law, the Financial Law No. 8 of 1990, the Enterprises Law No. 35 of 1991, and the other valid laws.

Article 9:

This law shall go into effect as of 1 January 1996 and shall be published in the Official Gazette.

Issued at the Presidency in Sanaa on 21 March 1996.

[Signed] Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, president of the republic

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Yemen: Finance Minister 'Satisfied' With House Approval of Budget

JN2203092196 Sanaa Yemeni Republic Radio Network in Arabic 2000 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a statement to the YEMENI NEWS AGENCY, SABA', Finance Minister Muhammad Ahmad al-Junayd said he is satisfied with the House of Representatives' endorsement of the budget law for fiscal year 1996 and with the [IMF] executive directors' decision to approve the national program for financial and economic reform in Yemen and to provide the program with financial support amounting to $198 million, 75 per cent of Yemen's quota. The first installment will be drawn on 25 March 1996.

Al-Junayd noted that the sums that will be drawn from the IMF and World Bank in the coming days, and the

$30 million second installment to be transferred to our country from the Arab Monetary Fund before the end of this month will provide extra resources that will enable our country to improve exchange rates, stabilize the national currency rates, finance various development projects, stabilize the economic situation, and pave the way for comprehensive development, God willing. He said that the next few weeks will witness a new method of implementing the general budget according to the approved financial and economic policies. This involves the delegation of powers in the financial field to push all aspects of the reform toward broad horizons in implementation of directives by brother Lieutenant General 'Ali 'Abdallah Salih, the president and commander in chief of the Armed Forces.

Iraq: Kamil's Cousin Explains Reasons for Return

MM2103150096 London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 17-23 Mar 96 pp 20, 21

[Interview with Major 'Izz-al-Din al-Majid, "General Husayn Kamil's cousin and brother-in-law who defected with him to Jordan but refused to return with him to Baghdad" by unidentified correspondent in Amman; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [AL-MAJALLAH] When did General Husayn Kamil think of returning to Baghdad?

[Al-Majid] He was first tempted by the idea of returning on 17 December 1995. He broached the matter with me and I explained to him the dangers and the negative impact of such a decision. I pleaded with him to forget the idea and not to mention it, because we had left Iraq in pursuit of objectives which had not been achieved, and because returning would give the wrong impression.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Why did he think of returning?

[Al-Majid] Gen. Husayn Kamil had held out his hand to the Iraqi opposition. However, because of international and regional pressures and instead of agreeing with him on the objective of changing the regime in Iraq, it had adopted positions which were far removed from the desired objective, relying on excuses that had no justification from a strategic or tactical viewpoint. The lack of understanding within the Iraqi opposition, and the fact that it adopted a negative attitude toward Husayn Kamil, were the reasons for his return.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Was he subjected to any pressures which would have made him hasten his return?

[Al-Majid] Apart from what I mentioned earlier, there was no other reason for his return than the fact that the opposition was not cooperating with him. Therefore, the assumption that he left Amman because he had been subjected to pressures is unfounded. During his stay in Jordan, Husayn Kamil was not subjected to any pressures; in fact, just the opposite. The Jordanian brothers made sure that he was comfortable and that he had everything he needed. King Husayn was at the forefront of those who were keen to ensure his comfort, following up on every detail in this regard, and so were the Jordanian brothers at the other levels.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Did he think of what would happen to him in Baghdad?

[Al-Majid] It never crossed Husayn Kamil's mind that the regime would entice him to his death and would lay a trap from him, starting with deception and ending with assassination. He believed that the mediation had succeeded, that the pledge would be honored, and that the amnesty issued was a word of honor and a state decision. I advised him to think carefully and learn from experience, and stressed that the regime did not honor any pledges or promises, and that its word could not be trusted.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Who supported the idea of the return and who opposed it?

[Al-Majid] Apart from Gen. Husayn Kamil, none of the men was for the idea of returning. Even Colonel Saddam Kamil and his brother Hakam Kamil, may God have mercy on their souls, were both opposed to returning but were subjected to pressures from their elder brother Gen. Husayn Kamil and did as he wished.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Is the story of the attack on the al-Sayyidiyah home true or is it a fabrication by the Iraqi regime's organs?

[Al-Majid] I believe that the attack was created by the regime itself. It was set up and directed as has been reported. What was said about the attackers in the Iraqi official account is untrue. The late Tha'ir 'Abd-al-Qadir, in whose al-Sayyidiyah house Gen. Husayn Kamil was staying, was related to the general and was one of those who defended him and his brothers.

Major Ahmad 'Abd-al-Ghaffar is the president's special companion and likely to have been among the attackers who were led by 'Ali Hasan al-Majid. Incidentally, the attackers were from the special Republican Guard.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Why did you not return to Baghdad?

[Al-Majid] We departed only for a major patriotic objective and a sacred cause. Therefore accomplishing the mission was the primary objective, which should not have been overlooked. As it happens, returning goes against the patriotic objective for which we left and has a negative impact that we do not want.

I will not reverse my position on the regime and the need to change it. To give up on this objective is to relinquish patriotic responsibility. Therefore returning only meant going back repentant and empty-handed.

In my view, we should return in the light of a democratic Iraq which respects the people, recognizes their rights, and puts a high value on the individual.

[AL-MAJALLAH] What is the actual number of victims in the Husayn Kamil assassination?

[Al-Majid] I do not have a precise number in this respect. I can only say that the number of victims was high, and that the resistance went on for 14 hours in a house where the late Tha'ir 'Abd-al-Qadir kept weapons and ammunition.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Could you describe Husayn Kamil's last days in Amman?

[Al-Majid] He was optimistic about the return to Baghdad, despite the fact that I stressed that this optimism was out of place and reminded him that, although the regime had previously granted a similar amnesty to others, what had happened was that they were eliminated, as in the case of the late Raji al-Tikriti and others.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Did Husayn Kamil think about visiting Arab or Western states?

[Al-Majid] He thought of that at first, but gave up on the idea because of the Iraqi opposition's attitude. Afterward, he thought of returning to Baghdad.

[AL-MAJALLAH] What is the situation of Saddam Husayn's family?

[Al-Majid] I cannot describe its situation, because I am away, but I believe that it is at its worst, because the family are living in isolation.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Who are the family members who support President Saddam Husayn and those who are against him now?

[Al-Majid] The profiteers, the greedy, and the ambitious are with President Saddam Husayn, while all those who want Iraq's good and its people's freedom are against him.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Will Gen. Husayn Kamil's assassination weaken President Saddam Husayn?

[Al-Majid] Because of the way it happened, the assassination will weaken President Saddam Husayn. It has confirmed the validity of the accusations that the regime is bloodthirsty and terrorist. This massacre has given the coup de grace to what was left of the regime's credibility and has unmasked it in front of the Iraqi people, the Arab nation, and the world.

[AL-MAJALLAH] How would you define your relationship with Gen. Husayn Kamil?

[Al-Majid] I am his cousin, his friend, and his confidant. At the end of official meetings, the general would come to me directly even after midnight to tell me of his concerns and problems. I was one of the special guard officers. I was arrested in 1991, accused of conspiracy to change the regime, and, by the grace of God, escaped two assassination attempts.

From the seventies through 1981 I was an intelligence officer, assigned to the president's protection. In 1982, I joined the academy and graduated as an officer. I was one of the founders of the special Republican Guard, with which I stayed until I was arrested in 1991. In prison, there were negotiations with me with regard to retirement, and that is what happened.

[AL-MAJALLAH] Do you believe that the wives of Husayn Kamil and his brother (Raghd and Rana) approved of their husbands' rebellion?

[Al-Majid] Some 15 days before our departure from Baghdad, Gen. Husayn Kamil informed me that he had told his wife about leaving Iraq. When I heard the news, it struck me like a thunderbolt, and I said to him: How can we do it? Are you not afraid that she will tell the president? He said that he trusted his wife, that she was aware of the Iraqis' suffering, and that he had explained the situation to her.

Col. Saddam Kamil's wife was told the news four days before our departure. However, neither Raghd nor Rana knew that I would be leaving with my wife. Gen. Husayn Kamil and Col. Saddam Kamil did not put them in the picture, for fear that they would tell their relatives and so that I would be in a secure position to orchestrate any operation that would help release them. Afterward, we fled from Iraq.

[AL-MAJALLAH] How was the relationship between Raghd, Rana, and their husbands in Amman?

[Al-Majid] The relationship was normal and good; it was that of two wives and their husbands, with a great deal of love and affection.

[AL-MAJALLAH] How do you imagine their situation in Baghdad now?

[Al-Majid] At its worst, because they feared for their husbands' lives if they returned to Iraq.

Iraq: SAIRI Leader on 'Formula' for Changing Iraqi Regime

NC2103175596 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 17 Mar 96 pp 1, 14

[TEHRAN TIMES Service report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—Head of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq [SAIRI], Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Hakim, told the TEHRAN TIMES here that the recent killings of Saddam's sons-in-law proved to the world that the Iraqi regime does not honor its commitments.

Referring to efforts made by some international bodies in order to convince others that Iraq has been bound by all agreements and resolutions during the past five years, Hakim said that the slaying of Kamil Hasan and his family indicates that Saddam does not respect any commitment and, as the Egyptian Defense Minister says, the killing of Saddam's sons-in-law thwarted all efforts made to achieve confidence for the regime and improve Iraq's ties with its neighbors.

Such barbarism was not new for the Saddam. Kamil Hasan himself was responsible for several killings, but during Saddam's rule there had not been such overt murder. The killing of Kamil Hasan, his brothers, father, children and women in his family was a terrible act, Hakim said.

Concerning the aftermath of the Kamil Hasan killings, Hakim said it would undoubtedly deepen the gaps in Iraq with negative effects in and out of the country.

According to received information, after Saddam issued the command to kill his sons-in-law, he was shot by his security guards and seriously injured. Since Saddam was not seen in any ceremony, meeting or on live television after the killing of Kamil Hasan on February 19, it is said that he is in critical condition.

On the outcome of his recent visit to Kuwait, during which Hakim exchanged views with Kuwaiti officials, focusing on the issue of Iraq, he said: "Kuwait is always subject to Iraq's invasion. However, there is deep sympathy between the people of Iraq and Kuwait and it is our duty to reinforce this sympathy."

Hakim further elaborated on the aims of his visit, saying that one of his main objectives was to inform Kuwaiti officials that Iraq's hostility and threats against the people of Iraq and Kuwait have not been diminished. "We submitted information and statistics in this regard to Kuwaiti officials," he added.

"We also reminded Kuwaiti officials that the threat of the Iraqi regime would not be diminished unless fundamental changes occur. The people of Iraq should share in the government; otherwise, there is no guarantee for preventing the Iraqi regime from acts of aggression. The guarantee offered by foreign powers has a temporary effect because political decisions made in Iraq are unstable and can easily change the agreements of foreign powers with relation to Iraq," said Hakim.

In this visit we made Kuwaitis aware of an appropriate formula for changing the regime in Iraq. We believe that the formulae presented by others in recent days are only a waste of time.

Asked about the official stance of Kuwait towards Saddam's regime, Hakim replied, "In a recent interview, the Kuwaiti minister of propagation was quoted as saying that a weak Saddam is better for the region than an unknown government. But in my recent visit to Kuwait it was revealed that Kuwait is firm with its past stance which prefers the collapse of Saddam's regime. As Kuwaitis informed us, the said interview is distorted; it does not reflect the official stance of the Kuwaiti government."

Hakim further called his visit to Kuwait "positive and fruitful," emphasizing that Kuwait and the Islamic Republic of Iran were the only two countries in the world to provide the oppressed people of Iraq with humanitarian aid.

Iraq: SAIRI Leader Comments on King Husayn's Plan

NC2103190096 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 18 Mar 96 pp 1, 14

[TEHRAN TIMES Service report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran — Criticizing the presence of foreign powers, particularly the United States in the Persian Gulf region, the Head of the Supreme Assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq [SAIRI], Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Hakim told the TEHRAN TIMES that such a wide presence of foreign forces does not aim to assist Iraqi people in overthrowing Saddam Husayn.

"The United States wishes to show to the world that, contrary to the Cold War era during which Washington indirectly controlled the region, it now directly controls the region. The United States adopted such policy during the Iraqi-imposed war against Iran, the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and in Somalia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Haiti."

Asked whether Kuwait would cooperate with the United States to find a proper successor for Saddam, Hakim said that it is unlikely any change would come about by a non-Iraqi citizen residing in Iraq or through a military coup.

Hakim went on to say that the United States consistently disseminates information that Iran is a center of danger in the region. By disseminating false information about Iran, the United States dictates its hostile policies against Iran to others, attempting to convince them that they should be afraid of Iran and keep away from it. In other words, the United States justifies its presence in the region under the pretext of protecting regional countries against Iran.

Another reason for the U.S. presence in the region is to support certain regional countries against possible threats. Moreover, as a country which invaded Kuwait and Iran, Iraq is a serious threat to the region, and even after the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, it sent troops and armored vehicles to its borders with Kuwait.

On the probability of a clash between U.S. troops currently present in the region and Iranian forces, Hakim said it is very unlikely until the so-called Middle East peace process has ended.

Commenting on the growth of opposition groups in Iraq and the wide range of their operations against the regime, Hakim said that in recent clashes between the opposition and the ruling Ba'thist forces, which took place in a sensitive region between al-Nasiriyah and al-Amarah, the opposition prevented Ba'thists from drying up southern marshlands. Moreover, a large number of Ba'thists were taken captive, and their arms and equipment seized by the opposition. According to our information, the Iraqi Army used some of its most forceful divisions in this battle which ended with the defeat and complete withdrawal of the Iraqi Army from the region.

On the possibility of a military coup in Iraq, Hakim said that such a coup is unlikely except through cooperation between the people and the army.

Referring to unity among Iraqis, Hakim termed it 'satisfactory', adding, "The relations among Arabs, Kurds, Shia and Sunni Muslims in Iraq is improving; we spare no effort in strengthening this unity."

With different schools of religious thought and different races, the Iraqi people have lived in peace for decades. It was the Ba'th Party, particularly Saddam's regime, which spread the seed of discord. But we thank God that today, as Saddam's power declines, national unity among the Iraqis is strengthened, Hakim said.

Asked about unity among different political groups in Iraq, Hakim said that the ground for their unity is prepared; they are ready to cooperate against Saddam's regime, but the crucial fact is that such unity requires a well organized mobilization.

Commenting on King Husayn's plan for Iraq, Hakim said that the king has not presented a specific and clear plan for the future of Iraq. "What the king offered was a series of thoughts which emphasized the campaign against dictatorship, establishment of a federal government, settlement of domestic problems, and the restoration of the rights of different races. King Husayn, who has at times been a close ally of Saddam Husayn, has adopted an opposite stance against him, Hakim added.

By changing his stance, King Husayn has two objectives: On the one hand, he aims to gain the confidence and coordination of the Persian Gulf littoral states and, on the other hand, he wants to smooth the way for friendly ties with the regime which will likely replace Saddam in the future. King Husayn has made relentless efforts to promote his ideas, but it is not possible to change the ruling system of Iraq with the help of a political movement or propaganda. The only way to change is through force, provided that this force will be imposed by the Iraqi people themselves, Hakim said.

The significant point is where this force would come from? From within Iraq or from without? In our view, it cannot come from outside of Iraq.

In addition, it should be made clear by King Husayn what he expects from his future relations with Iraq. Friendly relations and mutual respect. This would be a wise point of view. Or, a dominating and interfering relations, which would not be wise. Neither the Iraqis nor regional countries are prepared to accept this. The international atmosphere would not allow one country to conquer another independent country annexing its territory.

On the Damascus Conference to be held March 20, in which Iraqi opposition groups will take part, Hakim said that, as of March 4, there had been no official invitation to Iraqis for participating in the conference.

Asked to comment on the effectiveness of the conference, Hakim said it can be effective if it seeks a practical way of changing the Iraqi political system. It will not be successful if it only focuses on propaganda.

Iraq: UN Chief Voices Optimism Over Oil-for-Food Agreement

JN2103204896 Baghdad Iraq Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 21 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] UN Secretary General Dr. Butrus Butrus-Ghali expressed optimism over reaching an agreement with Iraq in the dialogue on oil for food, medicine, and the Iraqi people's other basic needs.

In a statement to the IRAQI NEWS AGENCY [INA] correspondent in Paris at the end of a meeting with French President Jacques Chirac at the Elysee Palace, he said that he discussed with the French president the results of the recent round of talks between Iraq and the United Nations.

The UN secretary general noted that the third round of talks will be held in New York on 8 April, expressing his optimism over reaching an agreement.

Sources at the French presidential palace told the INA correspondent in Paris that France is exerting all its efforts in order to reach an agreement on the oil for food, medicine, and the other basic needs of the Iraqi people.

The sources added that France is happy and satisfied with the progress made in the rounds of dialogue between Iraq and the United Nations, and that France hopes the two sides will reach an agreement on this issue.

Iraq: Iraqi Sources Said 'Optimistic' Over Talks With UN

NC2203114396 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1045 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 22 Mar (MENA)—Informed Iraqi sources expressed their optimism over the outcome of the third round of talks with the United Nations on implementing the formula of oil in return for food, medicines, and the Iraqi people's basic needs, which is slated to be held in New York on 8 April, noting that this round will be final and decisive.

In statements to the MENA correspondent in Baghdad, these sources said today that reaching an agreement with the United Nations is near at hand and that the negotiations are nearing completion. They added that the two sides will reach an agreement during the third round on the formula of oil in return for food and that it is a matter of time now.

The second round of talks ended last Monday without any announcement that the two sides had reached an agreement.

Recall that the two sides are negotiating over Security Council Resolution 986 of April 1995, which allows Iraq to export limited amounts of oil, 700,000 barrels a day valued at $1 billion, every three months.

The Iraqi sources said they expect an agreement to be reached with the United Nations during the third round on the issue of and mechanism for distributing food and medicines bought from Iraqi oil sales in the Kurdish area in northern Iraq. They said: This is possible in light of the two sides' good intentions and the positive climate prevailing in these rounds. They noted that 85 points of the oil in return for food formula were decided during the past two rounds and that there remains only one point concerning the mechanism for distributing food and medicine in the Kurdish area.

The issue of distributing food and medicine among the Kurds in northern Iraq without Baghdad's participation is one of two points that Iraq has strongly rejected since Security Council Resolution 986 was issued. The second concerns the export of Iraq's oil through Turkish territories. This question was settled during the second round of negotiations.

The Iraqi sources described the issue of reaching an agreement with the United Nations during the third round as a step toward the complete lifting of the siege imposed on Iraq in accordance with paragraph 22 of Security Council Resolution 687, whose implementation is regarded as the way out for lifting the siege completely.

Resolution 687 and its paragraph 22 stipulate that the sanctions on Iraq will be lifted as soon as the UN special committee confirms that Iraq does not possess weapons of mass destruction.

Concluding their statement, the Iraqi sources underlined Iraq's serious desire to implement the oil in return for food formula. They said that this stems from the dire need to provide food and medicine for the Iraqi people, which are suffering from the ugliest siege known to the world.

According to FAO and UNDP reports published here recently, four million Iraqis are living under the poverty line and are facing the danger of famine as a result of the siege.

Iraq: Smuggling of Sheep to Jordan Reported

96LH0118A Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic
10 Jan 96 p 5

[Article by Huda Malik Shabib: "Some Facts About Smuggling Red Gold: The Grownups Do It, the Children Tell About It"]

[FBIS Translated Text] From afar, before the landmarks of the city of al-Fallujah become distinct to you, the rays of the noon sun pound down, you turn and survey both directions of the crossroads that stretch deep into the desert and low hills. The truth seems quite clear to you.

In the beginning, small white things crowd along on the ground, while big red things sway in the open air.

We ask: "What are the facts?"

Several kilometers on, we approached herding complexes, an adjacent area of which is used as a center for experiments. There you will see the sheep playing inside the boundaries set for them while children jump and play with one another.

In the early hours of the morning they play apart, the young not united by a specific goal, but after the sun approaches them and the sound of trucks gradually is heard with their huge tires rumbling, the children gather into one group. Without any orders, signs, or gestures, they set off as quick as a wink and stand beside the trucks. When the children approach, they transform the quiet and tranquillity with their disorganized voices and behavior. From afar, an observer can understand none of their movements.

We ask once again, what are the facts? What is going on?

The children climbed on top of the trucks. Some of them opened the passenger door and sat beside the driver while others hung from the door.

The driver walked away from his truck with the children racing along behind him. Within minutes, the doors of the side compartments opened to load the ice sold on the second platform at 750 dinars [D] per block.

The bleating of the sheep drowns out the voice of the shepherd as he answers our question about the prices of his sheep. He is clearly annoyed. Small sheep go for D60,000 and big ones for D70,000. A kilogram of meat goes for D4,000, the skin and intestines for D7,000. The liver "as is" — that is, regardless of weight — costs D7,000.

What about the private customers? He does not reply and he busies himself feeding the sheep.

We walk from our car, and the throng of grownups breaks up. We ask one question after another, with no replies. We go on a little bit to the second and third vendors. We made it to the final vendor, and the little ones came rushing toward us after successfully completing their mission with the truck. They crowded into the photographer's lens. I asked questions, and they answered.

The owners of the trucks prefer Iraqi meat because it is fresh, while in the markets in Jordan it is sold dried. Iraqi sheep are fat, while Jordanian sheep are weak and their grazing is meager. That is why they buy Iraqi meat at exorbitant prices and sell it there for 7 Jordanian dinars-that is, Iraqi D28,000. They also smuggle out the skins and the intestines, from which surgical thread is made.

The sheep themselves are bought for nearly D100,000 from other governorates and are sold at many times their price to people with trucks who prefer to have the slaughtering done right in front of them.

I ask them how many sheep are sold in a single day.

The first one says, "Twenty."

A second one answers, "Six or seven sheep per day."

After half an hour, small trucks arrive, full of sheep. We approached and they went away. We let them bargain, and the children continued to report the facts about the grownups, the oldest of whom came over to slap their faces and to force them to retreat off to the side.

"Why?" we asked.

"They cause all the problems," he answered.

Before the problems grew any worse, we drove off in our car leaving the red corpses hanging by the neck of the facts!

We resumed wondering: Why was this going on? How had smuggling reached this degree of professionalism, with this meat that citizens cannot afford? Just a few questions in search of an answer.

Israel: Baraq Sees U.S. Pressure Having 'No Effect' on Hizballah

TA2103192696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq has said that the U.S. attempts to lower tensions in south Lebanon have apparently had no effect on Hizballah. Minister Baraq noted that Hizballah's activity over the past few days called for an appropriate response which would be decided upon by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces].

As for the threats made by Hizballah leader Hasan Nasrallah, Foreign Minister Baraq said that Israel should judge Hizballah by its actions and not by its leaders' statements.

Our correspondent Yaron Kaner reports that Baraq was speaking at a meeting of ambassadors in Tel Aviv. The foreign minister also addressed the Lebanese Government and urged it to stop Hizballah's activities. Baraq said the Beirut government was one of the parties responsible for Hizballah's activity from Lebanon.

Israel: U.S. Request To 'Refrain From Escalating Tensions' Reported

TA2203045796 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The United States has sent a message to Israel asking it to refrain from escalating tensions in south Lebanon so long as Hizballah carries out no further attacks. A senior American official told Yisra'el Radio's correspondent in Washington that the U.S. will determine to what extent Syria can restrain Hizballah by the results on the ground.

Israel's ambassador in the U.S. capital, Itamar Rabinovich, is holding frequent contacts with senior American officials on the situation.

Israel: U.S. Seen Acting on South Lebanon; IDF Termed Ineffective

TA2203090396 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 22 Mar 96 pp A1, A2

[Article by Ze'ev Schiff: "The IDF Does Not Have an Operational Answer"]

[FBIS Translated Text] The United States is trying to expand the quiet understandings reached in the wake of Operation Accountability so that they include not only the ban on hitting civilian settlements, but also prevent other fighting in the security zone.

The immediate aim of the American mediation efforts between Israel and Syria is to achieve quiet in south Lebanon and to restrain Hizballah. Washington views the expansion of the understandings as the second stage of its efforts.

Israel has decided to give the United States a certain period of time to continue the mediation. The outcome will decide if and when military steps will be taken in response to Hizballah actions. That is why the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] has still not received an order to act in Lebanon.

The current forceful mediation campaign, which has the agreement of Israel and Syria, followed Hizballah's latest offensive in south Lebanon. During Secretary of State Warren Christopher's visit here, Shim'on Peres, prime minister and defense minister, made it clear to him that Israel would be forced to react resolutely if Hizballah's attacks continue.

With Peres' agreement, the Americans conveyed that message to President al-Asad. The Syrian president's response was that he would act to restrain Hizballah in order to prevent a conflagration. When the response arrived, Peres said that he would now wait for proof of the declaration on the ground. The organization's attacks Wednesday [20 March] night raised doubts about whether al-Asad has kept his word.

The Americans again appealed to the Syrians, who responded that these actions could not be prevented because they had been planned far in advance and that a halt to activity would require a certain period of time. It has been learned that Washington is very skeptical about the explanation, and, like Israel, is waiting for developments.

Observers believe that Israel has voluntarily entered a waiting period until it becomes clear whether Syria has managed to restrain Hizballah and to neutralize the Iranian pressure imposed on it.

Have the quiet understandings worked out between Israel and Hizballah after Operation Accountability been violated? Israeli spokesmen — including Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq, who was chief of staff when the understandings were reached — claim that Hizballah is blatantly violating them. But a study of the military situation since the latest offensive started does not show that. The problem in Lebanon appears to be more related to the fact that the IDF has not been able to find an operational answer to the latest wave of terrorist attacks.

The Israeli-Hizballah understandings reached with American mediation and with the intervention of Damascus focused on one main issue: an agreement not to harm Israeli settlements and Lebanese villages. The aim was to remove the civilian population from the fighting. That satisfied the Lebanese because in

Operation Accountability, tens of thousands of civilians abandoned their homes and fled to the Beirut area as refugees for fear that they would be harmed by Israeli fire. Israel announced at the time that it would not take responsibility for those remaining in the villages it was going to shell because of the Hizballah presence. When the understandings were reached, Israel noted that if its forces or the SLA [South Lebanese Forces] are fired at from the villages, the IDF would be forced to hit the sources of fire. The understandings did not in any way refer to fighting inside the security zone, and Hizballah regarded itself free to act there, just as the IDF saw itself free to act north of the security zone.

Since that understanding was reached, Hizballah has violated it many times, and civilian settlements — in Lebanon and Israel — have been hit. But the last such violation by Hizballah was carried out in December 1995. In the latest wave of attacks, Hizballah has avoided hitting civilian targets. It is, therefore, not violating the understandings.

The problem thus lies in the operational problems facing the IDF. The quality of Hizballah's actions over the past two months has improved and they have been closer to the Israeli border. The methods are varied, and it appears that Hizballah is succeeding in collecting accurate intelligence prior to each action. The perpetrators of the attacks are apparently better trained than before. The IDF has failed to find an effective operational response to this situation.

Israel: Baraq Urges International Security Service Coordination

BR2203111196 Milan PANORAMA in Italian
28 Mar 96 p 93

[Report on interview with Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq by Simonetta Della Seta; place and date not given: "If 'Arafat Helps Us"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] "We have no alternative to using a firm hand and to adopting all possible measures to prevent Islamic terrorism from continuing to kill. Until 'Arafat captures the Hamas criminals still circulating freely in Gaza, Israel will not be able to loosen its grip, nor must it do so." Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Baraq's gutsy answer sounded more like a soldier's than a politician's. [passage omitted]

But are demolishing houses and expelling entire families not counterproductive methods? "A country, even a democratic country, has a duty to adopt any measures needed to fight against evil. Be that as it may, Israel will do everything in its power not to prolong the Palestinians' discomfort and suffering." Following the deaths of six people due to the shortage of drugs in Palestinian hospitals, Israel is allowing emergency cases through. "It is still too early to open up the borders between Israel and the autonomous areas to the 23,000 Palestinian laborers. Everybody knows the risks we run." Is 'Arafat making any moves? "He is going to have to."

Baraq's aides added that there is a semantic but crucial difference between the Israeli view and that of the others. Baraq said: "It is generally assumed that by making peace one can defeat terrorism. We have learned that only by destroying its roots can we move forward toward peace. Be that as it may, Israel today is less isolated." In Baraq's view, "there exists a conviction at international level that we and the Palestinians are no longer sufficient to fight terrorism, nor should the struggle be restricted to the Middle East and, at most, North Africa. Everybody, but everybody, must get involved." The foreign minister continued: "Only true coordination between the [security] services of all countries, including the Arab countries, can stop these groups, by neutralizing their funding and by severing the links between the various cells."

The results of the Sharm al-Shaykh peace conference are convincing, in Israel's view. "There were some concrete proposals, even from the Turks, from the Jordanians, and from the Arab countries in the Gulf. A working group under U.S. leadership will now produce results," Baraq predicted. "Even Yeltsin made a commitment to keep an eye on Iran. That is where terrorism is ensconced." Will it serve any purpose? "Certainly, in the long term. In the short term what counts is what we do on the ground, together with 'Arafat."

Israel: Plan for U.S. Army Division on Golan To Be Unveiled

TA2203053296 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew
22 Mar 96 pp 1, 2

[Report by 'Oded Granot]

[FBIS Translated Text] An Israeli Foreign Ministry document, which will be presented in Brussels next week within the dialogue between Israel and NATO, proposes deploying a fully armed American division on the Golan Heights as one of four possible alternatives for maintaining security in a future agreement between Israel and Syria.

The other three alternatives are: The establishment of a joint Israeli-Syrian force to uphold the peace; the establishment of a multinational force in which army units from Israel and Syria would participate; and the continuation of UNDOF, the UN Disengagement Observation Force, in strengthened form.

The Israeli document, prepared by the Foreign Ministry's Policy Planning Department, will be disclosed for the first time in a meeting with NATO representatives in Europe. Israel has so far avoided publicly presenting its own ideas on a defense arrangement on the Golan Heights following a withdrawal, and the subject has not even been discussed within the framework of the talks with Syria in Maryland.

On the "American alternative," the document says, among other things: "This refers to a new international force — not within the framework of the United Nations — which would mainly be made up of American soldiers and would be headed by an American commander, with the participation of units from other selected countries.... The aim is to create a division-size force with a deterrent capability, which would be equipped with tanks and armored personnel carriers, and which could also man early warning stations....It refers to a force with military powers (such as the American force in Korea) which even if not expected to fight against a regular army in a real war "will enjoy the backing and full commitment of the United States."

The Israeli document does not refer to the depth of the Israeli withdrawal on the Golan. The Israeli delegation to the meeting with the senior NATO officials will be headed by Eytan Bentzur, the Foreign Ministry's deputy director general.

Israel: Suicide Bomber's Home Demolished; 3 Suspects Detained

TA2203081496 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0800 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The security forces today blew up the home of Majdi Abu-Wardah, the suicide bomber of Jerusalem bus No. 18, in the al-Fawwar refugee camp near Hebron. The house demolition was postponed due to technical reasons several days ago.

Early this morning in the Hebron area the security forces detained three individuals suspected of hostile terrorist activities. They were detained in the city and the al-Fawwar refugee camp.

Israel: Television Surveys Indicate 'Very Tight' Election Race

TA2103183196

[FBIS Report] Both Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew at 1700 GMT and Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew at 1700 GMT on 21 March carry reports on their weekly election surveys. Channel 1 reports the results of a survey conducted by the Smith Institute which indicate a slight advantage for Prime Minister Shim'on Peres. Political correspondent Nisim Mish'al notes that "Shim'on Peres received 48 percent of the vote, while Binyamin Netanyahu received 44 percent." Mish'al adds that "8 percent of the respondents remain undecided."

Channel 1 compares the results with a survey conducted last week, noting that "Peres is up by 1 percentage point while Netanyahu is down by 1 percent." A breakdown of the floating vote indicates "that two thirds of the floating vote lean toward Binyamin Netanyahu while a third is inclined toward Peres. In other words, factoring in the floating vote would result in a tie between Netanyahu and Peres." The survey's results on the respondents' voting patterns for the various parties shows that following the signing of the merger agreement with Tzomet and Gesher, the Likud has dropped to 35 percent as compared with 37 percent last week. The Labor Party garnered 36 percent of the vote last week. This week it climbed by 1 percentage point.

The breakdown of Knesset seats is as follows: "In the outgoing Knesset, the Labor Party has 44 seats. In last week's survey it won 45 seats. This week's survey gives it 46 seats." "The Likud and Tzomet combined currently have 40 seats in the outgoing Knesset. Last week they won 45 seats, while the results of this week's poll give them 44 seats." Mish'al asserts that these results are indicative of a very tight race. The public is almost equally split with regard to the elections for the premiership as well as on the party vote. A breakdown of the right and left-wing blocs indicates that "Labor, Meretz, and the Arab parties; what is commonly known as the left-wing camp, has 46.5 percent of the vote. Last week they stood at 46 percent. The right-wing camp, made up of the Likud, Tzomet, and Gesher, the religious parties, and Moledet total 45.5 percent of the vote as compared to last week's 48 percent. This constitutes a drop of 2.5 percent for the right-wing bloc." The results of the elections hang on the floating vote, which comprised 8 percent of the respondents. "If one factors in the floating vote," Mish'al says, "the results of the elections would be 50 versus 49 percent, or even a dead tie of 50 percent each."

Another question in the survey sought to determine the respondents' positions on the open primaries system as opposed to the previous system of smaller party committees choosing the candidates. The results show that 43 percent of the respondents consider the primaries a better system; 20 percent see them as no better or no worse; 13 percent do not know which system is better; and the remaining 17 percent have a negative view of the primary system."

Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew reports the results of a special election survey conducted for Channel 2 by the Teleseqer Institute. This poll shows that "the gap between Shim'on Peres and Binyamin Netanyahu in the race for the premiership is growing. Peres won 52 percent of the vote while Netanyahu received 46 percent."

Political correspondent Dov Gilhar reports that "following the first wave of suicide terrorist attacks the gap between the two men was 5 percent. After the second wave, Peres and Netanyahu were tied. One week later, after the Sharm al-Shaykh conference, Peres was again 4 percent in the lead. Today, one week later, Peres is leading by 6 percent." "The gap between the opponents and supporters of the peace process remained stable this week, narrowing only slightly. Those who support the process lead by approximately 10 percent."

Israel: Polls Find Peres Maintaining Lead Over Netanyahu

TA2203110096

[FBIS Report] The weekly Friday election polls in both major newspapers, Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT and MA'ARIV, on 22 March show that Labor Prime Minister Shim'on Peres continues to lead the Likud's Binyamin Netanyahu.

The first question in both polls was: "Were elections for prime minister held today and the candidates were Shim'on Peres and Binyamin Netanyahu, for whom would you vote?"

The YEDI'OT AHARONOT poll, which was conducted by the Dahaf Institute headed by Dr. Mina Tzemah, showed:

"Shim'on Peres, 49 percent (50 percent); Netanyahu, 47 percent (47 percent); No response/Undecided, 4 percent (3 percent). Figures in parenthesis are the results of a 15 March poll."

The MA'ARIV poll, carried out by the Gallup Institute, gave "Peres 49 percent and Netanyahu 43 percent, with 8 percent undecided."

Question two: "Were Knesset elections held today, for which list would you vote?"

The results of the YEDI'OT AHARONOT poll are:

List	Forecast of Knesset Seats	Current Knesset
Labor	43 (42)	44
Likud, Tzomet, Gesher	44 (42)	40
Meretz	5 (6)	12
Moledet	1-2 (3)	3
NRP	5 (5)	6
United Torah Jewry	4 (4)	4
SHAS	4 (4)	6
HADASH, ADP, al-Tibi	7 (7)	5 without al-Tibi
Third Way	2-3 (3)	—
Yisra'el Ba'aliya	4 (4)	—
Total	120	120

[Figures in parenthesis are the results of 15 March poll]

The results of the MA'ARIV poll are:

Labor	44
Likud, Tzomet, Gesher	40
Meretz	
SHAS	4
Moledet	3
United Torah Jewry	4
NRP	5-6
Arabs	6
Third Way	3-4
Immigrants	3
Do not Know/other	4

"The MA'ARIV poll was carried out among 580 people who represent the adult population." "The YEDI'OT survey was conducted on 20 March among 513 interviewees who constitute a representative sample of the adult population." The maximum margin of error in both polls is 4 percent.

[Key to abbreviations in tables: NRP — National Religious Party; SHAS — Torah Observing Sephardim; HADASH — Democratic Front for Peace and Equality; MDA — Arab Democratic Party; Ahmad al- Tibi's Arab Movement for Change]

Jordan: Former Iraqi Chief of Staff Seeks Asylum

JN2103184796 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1815 GMT 21 Mar 96

[Announcer-read report over video clip carrying caption "from the archives"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Lieutenant General Nizar al-Khazraji, former Iraqi chief of staff, joined the ranks of the Iraqi opposition after escaping Iraq through Iraqi Kurdistan.

Jordan Television learned that Lt. Gen. al-Khazraji submitted a request to the Jordanian Government asking to come to Jordan. An official source said the Jordanian Government has no objection to this.

Lt. Gen. al-Khazraji was the commander of the 7th Division in the Iraqi Army during the Iraqi-Iranian war and chief of staff until before the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. He was then dismissed from his post.

Jordan: Former Iraqi Chief of Staff Asylum Request Accepted

JN2203121996 Amman AL-RA'Y in Arabic 22 Mar 96 pp 1, 23

[FBIS Translated Text] Amman — Agencies — Minister of Information Dr. Marwan al-Mu'ashshir, said that the government accepted a request for asylum in the kingdom by Staff General Nizar al-Khazraji, former Iraqi chief of staff.

Dr. al-Mu'ashshir said that Jordan received the request yesterday morning in which the general expressed the desire to come to Jordan. He added that the request was accepted. Al-Khazraji is on his way to the country.

Press sources in Amman said that al-Khazraji would arrive on a Turkish Airlines plane from Istanbul, due to arrive at 2310 yesterday.

Iraqi opposition sources said that al-Khazraji crossed the Mosul Governorate in the Kurdish region in Northern Iraq last Tuesday [19 March], and then headed for Turkey.

The first announcement of al-Khazraji's departure came in statement issued by the Iraqi National Congress — a coalition of main opposition parties. The statement said that al-Khazraji worked as chief of staff of the Iraqi Army during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, and was commander of the Seventh Division which was stationed in al-Sulaymaniyah during the Iraqi-Iranian war 1980-1988.

However, Iraqi opposition sources voiced skepticism that al-Khazraji was chief of staff during the invasion of Kuwait and said that he was dismissed from his post in August 1990 and did not take part in preparations for the invasion. Al-Khazraji was quoted as saying that he would join the Iraqi National Accord, which is preparing to open an office in Amman.

Jordan: Sources Cited on Recent Arrests Among Islamists

JN2103202896 Amman AL-ASWAQ in Arabic 21-22 Mar 96 pp 1, 17

[Report by Nabil al-Ghayshan]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti yesterday asserted that national security was not a negotiable issue, that the recent arrests took place in accordance with the law, and that the detainees were under interrogation. Al-Kabariti announced that his government acted out of its national responsibility and not as a result of pressure or in response to anybody's views.

The prime minister yesterday told the House of Representatives that the only sword the government uses is the sword of the law and nothing else.

The prime minister's statements came after the deputies of the Islamic Action Front criticized the government time and again for the recent arrests of several Islamists who were described as supporters of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement].

It is strange, however, that the Islamist deputies, who criticized the arrests among the Islamists, particularly among the hardliners, did not ask during yesterday's House session for raising the government's foreign policy, although they signed a petition to that effect last Sunday. This indicates that the Islamists understand the government's position and the pressures to which it is exposed, as well as their belief in the legality of the current arrests. This will prevent escalation between the government and the Islamic movement.

A high-ranking government source told AL-ASWAQ yesterday that the government was being pressed by Arab and international parties to tighten the noose around Hamas in the Palestinian territories.

The government source said that only 20 people were arrested, including 'Ikrimah Gharayibah, 'Ali al-Faqir, and Yusuf Gharayibah from Irbid who had intended to carry out a military operation against the Israeli Army in the Palestinian territories.

The government source told AL-ASWAQ that security organs also seized automatic weapons that were in the possession of the three detainees.

The source corrected the information attributed to the prime minister yesterday that the security organs had aborted 36 terrorist attempts over the past six months. It said that these attempts were made after the signing of the Jordanian-Israeli peace accord.

Deputy 'Abd-al-Rahim al-'Ukur, deputy controller general of the Muslim Brotherhood, asserted that the three persons who were arrested in Irbid have nothing to do with the Muslim Brotherhood. He told AL-ASWAQ: "We in the Muslim Brotherhood do not believe in any military action from Jordanian territories under any title or for any reason whatsoever."

During yesterday's House session, Islamist deputy 'Abdallah al-'Akayilah, speaking on his own behalf, pointed out that the recent arrests were part of hostile plans to move the conflict to Jordan to sow the seeds of sedition and peddle certain ambitions.

Deputy al-'Akayilah said that Jordan constitutes only a small arena of Hamas' infrastructure and ideology.

AFP quoted security sources last Sunday as saying that three Islamists were recently arrested and their weapons seized, on charges of planning to attack foreign tourists.

The same source told AFP that these people were arrested while in possession of "antitank and antipersonnel mines and detonators, which were ready for use."

The source asserted that the three are university graduates and did not have the opportunity to "carry out their plans because they were arrested last month and the explosives that were hidden in their car were also seized."

The detainees, who are from the city of 'Ajlun in northern Jordan, pleaded guilty before the prosecutor general and would be referred to court soon. The security source added that there is no evidence that the detainees belonged to an extremist group, saying that they were motivated "to carry out their plans out of their anti-Israel sentiments."

One of the detainees is a nephew of a former Islamist deputy and has a master's degree in Islamic law, the second is an architect, and the third has a master's degree in archaeology.

Jordan: Arrested Iraqis, Others Had 'Subversive' Plans

MM2203104496 London AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI in Arabic 21 Mar 96 p 1

[Unattributed report: "Jordan Arrests Iraqi Group on Charges of Planning To Carry Out Subversive Actions"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Amman, AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI — Well-informed Iraqi opposition sources have revealed to AL-QUDS AL-'ARABI that Jordanian security services have recently arrested a group of Iraqi elements, associated with known official and security figures in Baghdad, conducting suspect activities on Jordanian territory.

The Jordanian Government has not announced any information about this matter. However, media information says that Iraqi elements belonging to official security organs in Iraq have been arrested and are now being interrogated on suspicion of planning to carry out subversive actions.

Other reports suggested two days ago that Jordan had arrested a number of elements belonging to the Abu-Nidal group who had received orders and instructions from Iraqi territory and planned to carry out subversive actions in Jordan.

It had been reported earlier that an Iraqi group had been arrested because it had come to Jordan to pursue Major 'Izz-al-Din al-Majid, the Iraqi dissident residing in Jordan and brother-in-law of Husayn Kamil. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Israel Reportedly Mediates U.S. Planes Deal

JN2203123496 Amman SHIHAN in Arabic 23-29 Mar 96 p 13

[FBIS Translated Text] A well-informed U.S. source told SHIHAN that the recent planes deal was met with strong objections by some U.S. Congress members because of their differences with President Clinton.

The source added that differences and objections were overcome after Israel intervened on Jordan's behalf, expressing willingess to take care of the maintenance of these planes.

Jordan: First Direct Flight to Israel Scheduled for 7 Apr

JN2203100196 Amman AL-DUSTUR in Arabic 22 Mar 96 pp 1, 20

[Report by Yahya al-Juju in Amman]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Royal Jordanian [RJ] will operate its first direct flight from Amman to Ben-Gurion Airport in Israel on 7 April.

Munib Tuqan, public relations manager at RJ, said that the transport and communications agreement signed between Jordan and Israel within the peace process stipulates that RJ and Israeli El Al Airlines will operate direct flights between the two countries. [passage omitted]

Lebanon: Nasrallah Vows To Hit Northern Israel if Shelling Continues

NC2103125196 (Clandestine) Radio Free Lebanon in Arabic 1145 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah, speaking in a news conference today, stated that Israel's threats will change nothing and that the resistance will continue as long as there is occupation. Nasrallah emphasized that if Israel shells civilians in south Lebanon, Hizballah reserves for itself the right to respond by firing rockets at northern Israel.

Noting that the recent operations came within the normal context, Nasrallah pointed out that the resistance men have penetrated all the Israeli troops' security barriers and are capable of moving anywhere within the border strip. He added that yesterday's suicide operation was carried out by 'Ali Munif Qashmar, who was born in the village of al-'Udaysah in 1976. He noted that the operation was dedicated to the male and female detainees in al-Khiyam Prison as well as in the Israeli prisons. Nasrallah added that Qashmar had taken part in many operations and activities by the Islamic Resistance. He joined one of the suicide groups in the middle of 1995, he added.

[In a related report, Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic at 1215 GMT on 21 March adds the following: "Asked about accusations that Iran and Syria back the resistance, Nasrallah said: Our decision is in our hands and Iran and Syria support our legitimate right. Concluding, Nasrallah stated that the occupied border strip is an open arena for the mujahidin."

[In another related report, Paris AFP in English at 1207 GMT on 21 March adds the following: "Speaking of the 'martyr,' Nasrallah said: 'His brothers in the Islamic Resistance (Hizballah's armed wing) are numerous and are ready to follow in his footsteps.'"]

Lebanon: Al-Hirawi Says Escalation Will Negatively Affect Israel

NC2103205596 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 2015 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputies who visited President Ilyas al-Hirawi this evening quote him as saying that if Israel escalates the military tension in the south it will have a negative effect on Israel itself. Al-Hirawi called on the international community to seek to implement UN Security Council Resolution 425. If they do, he said, Israel will withdraw from the south and the resistance operations will stop.

The president remarked that resistance is a legal right to defend occupied territory.

Lebanon: Defense Minister Expects 'Limited' Israeli Operations

NC2103175396 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul has stressed that the Lebanese Army is on full alert to face any development, adding that there is coordination among all state institutions, which are fully prepared.

In an interview with the magazine AL-BILAD to be published tomorrow, Minister Dallul said he expects Israel to carry out limited operations in Lebanon. However, he ruled out a wide-scale incursion of Lebanese territories, since this would cost Israel dearly.

Concerning the media organization law, Dallul stressed the need to close down all radios and televisions, with the exception of [state-run] Radio Lebanon and Tele Liban.

Concerning President al-Hirawi's election proposal, Minister Dallul said: Before going any further in this regard we must thoroughly examine this proposal to avoid it becoming a sectarian problem in the country.

Lebanon: Buwayz Expects 'Qualitative Israeli Aggression' in South

NC2203072496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Deputy Habib Sadiq has cited Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz as saying that the latter expects some qualitative Israeli aggression in the south. There are two factors behind this attack: The first factor consists of the aggressive nature of the Israeli entity, and the second factor is the result of the current atmosphere, since Israeli public opinion is still angry because of the operations that took place in Israel. Minister Buwayz stressed the importance of the role the resistance is playing. He highlighted its legitimacy, because it performs a national role to liberate a cherished part of the homeland's territory from Israeli occupation.

Lebanon: U.S. Embassy Statement, Israeli Threats Linked

NC2203101896 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 22 Mar 96

[From the "A Pause at an Event" program]

[FBIS Translated Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Even if the statement from the U.S. Embassy in Beirut [expressing astonishment at the Lebanese judiciary's acquittal of two Lebanese accused of killing former U.S. Ambassador Francis Melloy in

1976] came as a surprise to the official Lebanese media, the Lebanese people were not surprised. Officials are entitled to be surprised; diplomacy has its own logic and norms. But those who are accustomed to statements, threats, and the language of media and artillery shelling can no longer be surprised. They are used to the Americans eating their flesh and destroying their houses over the heads of their children. And for a long time, the Americans had been the decision makers in Lebanon in all spheres.

The ambassador of the terrorist superpower, therefore, wanted to accuse the Lebanese judiciary, and consequently the political authorities. The U.S. ambassador in Beirut did not coordinate with the Lebanese Foreign Ministry. He coordinated with the leaders of the Zionist enemy, with whom the Americans have bonds of kin. In its infamous statement, the U.S. Embassy claimed that Lebanon has returned to a state of chaos. At the same time, Uri Lubrani, the coordinator of the activities of the Zionist occupation in Lebanon, was saying that Lebanon has returned to the pre-1982 dark period.

Lubrani mentioned that year to suggest that it marked the beginning of the transfer from the dark to the light at the hands of the occupier Zionists, who destroyed humans and property the summer of that year. But one of the advantages of that aggression is that the Islamic and national resistance was born, forcing the occupation to withdraw from a large portion of the Lebanese territory.

The Zionist statement is meant to support the position of the United States, which, for years, has been trying to cast doubt on the Lebanese state's ability to run the country. At times, the U.S. Administration accuses the Lebanese Government of yielding to Iran, Syria, and the fundamentalists. At others, it prevents Americans from traveling to Lebanon under the pretext that security in the country is unstable. But it is known that Lebanon is more stable than the United States itself. This is not a Lebanese claim; this is what the French ambassador said during his visit to the city of Ba'labakk last year.

Moreover, the U.S. Administration is seeking to deprive the states and peoples of the region of their rights to their land, freedom, and dignity under the pretext of continuing the negotiations and the peace process in the region. It wants this peace to serve the interests of the Zionists at the expense of the Lebanese and Syrians. The U.S. Administration, therefore, retreated from the land-for-peace principle and undermined the foundations on which negotiations were launched when the first conference on the region was held in Madrid four years ago.

The U.S. Administration began to think in the mentality of the Jewish extremists, who are calling for security in return for security and for peace in return for peace. Land is no longer mentioned, and the Americans are almost convinced that Jerusalem is Israel's eternal capital. Negotiations with Syria no longer became a demand in itself, but a means to push Damascus and Beirut to serve the Zionist enemy. A few days ago, the enemy prime minister announced that the resumption of the negotiations with Syria is linked to Damascus' response to the American demand that Syria adopt a stronger position against what they call terrorism. The demands are American, but the benefits go to Zionism.

According to the U.S. Administration, the terrorist is anyone demanding the liberation of his land, resisting the occupier, or rejecting the continuation of the occupation. But those who kill innocent people in southern Lebanon and in occupied Palestine, those who send their warplanes to bombard peaceful villages and cities, and those who break the bones of children and destroy houses over the heads of their inhabitants, who are free, honorable people searching for peace amid the rubble and graves of the martyrs and the victims of treachery.

The United States has nothing against Lebanon. But on behalf of the usurper entity and the terrorist U.S. mentality, Washington is certainly concerned about the country's situation. It is the party that decides, gives advice, and makes demands. The Zionists support this by engaging in further terrorist operations and military threats.

No country in the world interferes in the affairs of other countries like the United States does. It wants other governments to serve as tools to implement the plans drawn up by White House circles. It dictates policies or tries to do so; it decides the value of currencies and the importance of economy. It decides who this country or that should sell its oil to, and it imposes on courts the rulings that suit it. This is the meaning of the statement issued by Washington's embassy in Beirut. The embassy overstepped its diplomatic tasks a long time ago, and it still insists on interference, even in the affairs of the Lebanese judiciary.

Everyone knows that Lebanon experienced civil wars and internal battles. Foreigners did the planning and locals did the job, serving as fuel and tools for the war. A major decision was inevitably needed to erase the page of the war and its aftermath. Hence came the amnesty decision, which covered all political crimes. Just as fighters were equal during the war, they became equal during the years of peace. But Washington does not admire this decision, and it wants its subjects to be above suspicion, laws, and regulations, and political and judicial authorities. It rejected the ruling of the Court of Cassation and said that Lebanon moved 20 years backward. Washington wants the amnesty decision to be thrown away, which means new accusations should be leveled at all those who carried arms in Lebanon then, and those who carrying weapons against the occupation today.

Washington wants internal and civil wars to return as before; it wants civil peace to be shattered because its ambassador was killed 20 years ago. As for the hundreds of thousands of Lebanese, from all sects and groups, their blood does not have the value and dignity of the blood of a single American subject. This is the mentality of superiority, the mentality of the Talmud and God's chosen people. Hence came the Israeli threats to the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon, to Iran, and to Syria. The resistance is being threatened because it is involved in terrorism, and the three states are being threatened because they sponsor this terrorism.

It was necessary to give Israel the green light, and hence came the embassy statement. According to some press reports, the Israeli aggression against Lebanon was to be carried out last Tuesday [19 March]; that is, one day after the U.S. Embassy signal, meaning the infamous embassy statement. But the calculations of profit and loss, at which the Jews have been skilled for a long time, made them accept the alleged and fabricated U.S. State Department call and suspend the aggression, as said by terrorist Shim'on Peres. It is as if the United States wanted only good for Lebanon; it interceded with the Zionists to prevent evil from coming to Lebanon and the Lebanese! When was it that people expected good to come from the dens of the devil?

Perhaps the Americans and Zionists wanted to launch a psychological war and thus used this method of threatening to carry out an aggression and then intervening to stop the implementation. But what the United States and Israel are practicing in the region is a continuous and permanent aggression against states and peoples. A crime against the Lebanese is being perpetrated by the Zionists every day, and sometimes many times every day. If they want some calm, let them unconditionally withdraw from Lebanese, Syrian, and all other occupied territories. If they want to practice aggression, then the arms of the faithful are ready for their armored vehicles to reduce them to rubble. The resistance men no longer believe that there is an invincible army; they have actually conquered it. If the Zionists are shelling Lebanese cities and villages, the Zionist settlers will receive missiles, even inside their shelters; death will come to them even in their fortified towers.

The Israeli threat against the resistance men is not less hostile than the U.S. interference in Lebanon's affairs. The two things represent a multisided attempt to harm the steadfastness of the Lebanese, force them to stay away from Syria in the negotiations, and confuse the entire Lebanese situation.

The resistance men will never fear the Zionists. While they seek martyrdom, the enemies escape from death and do not desire it because their hands are stained with crimes, evil, and corruption. Let them do whatever they like; God will accomplish a matter already enacted [part of a Koranic verse].

Lebanon: Overnight Israeli Activities in Southern Lebanon Reported

NC2203115596 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 0530 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israeli attacks on the southern areas continued last night. The NATIONAL NEWS AGENCY [NNA] correspondents reported intermittent shelling of a number of areas and the firing of flares. The correspondents reported that the occupation forces imposed a curfew and subjected citizens they ran into on the roads to interrogation and searches, particularly in the occupied towns of al-'Udaysah, Markaba, and Rubb al-Thalathin. Most of the homes in these towns were stormed.

The NNA correspondent in the western al-Biqa' reported that tension and caution prevailed in the area after last night's shelling, flares, and threats from the Israeli enemy leaders. From the liberated villages along the occupied border strip one can see unusual Israeli mechanized troop movements inside the occupied strip. Troops are being moved around and substituted, which indicates that the enemy has aggressive intentions toward this area.

At the same time, the naval siege of the southern coasts continues and the enemy naval patrols continue to fire on the fishermen's boats to terrorize them. A short while ago, the NNA correspondent in al-Nabatiyah sent us this dispatch about the situation during the night.

[Begin recording] Israeli attacks on the villages of al-Nabatiyah and Iqlim al-Tuffah continued in the form of shelling and sniping throughout last night. The attacks continued until the early hours of the morning. As of 2200 last night, the Israeli occupation's artillery shelled the outskirts of Frun, al-Ghanduriyah, and the al-Litani River basin using 120-mm and 155-mm shells from the occupation posts in al-Zaffatah and al-Tayyibah. At around 0100 after midnight, Israel expanded its attacks on the villages of al-Nabatiyah.

Its heavy artillery shelled the outskirts of al-Nabatiyah al-Fawqa, Kafr Tibnit, Mazra'at al-Hamra', Arnun, Zawtar al-Sharqiyah, and Zawtar al-Gharbiyah using 155-mm shells. At the same time, the outskirts of 'Arab Salim, al-Wadi al-Akhdar, al-Jabal al-Rafi', Mazra'at al-Hamra', Mazra'at 'Uqmata, and the woods of Sujud and al-Rayhan came under similar shelling from the occupation posts in al-Zaffatah. These attacks were preceded by intermittent shelling at 1930 in the evening on the outskirts of al-Nabatiyah villages and coincided with heavy 12.7 caliber machine-gun fire targeting residential areas in some villages of the central sector, al-Nabatiyah, and Iqlim al-Tuffah. Helicopters also flew over these villages. They carried out large-scale combing operations in the woods of al-Wadi al-Akhdar, al-Litani River basin, Wadi al-Saluqi, and Wadi al-Hujayr using heavy machine guns.

Muhammad Shakkur, the NNA, al-Nabatiyah. [end recording]

Lebanon: Southern Areas Reportedly Shelled by Israel Forces

NC2103205496 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 2000 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Israeli forces resumed their attacks on defenseless towns and villages in the south this evening. The outskirts of Arnun, Yuhmur, Mazra'at al-Hamra', 'Alman, and al-Shumariyah were subjected to 120-mm and 155-mm artillery shelling from the enemy positions in Qal'at al-Shaqif and al-Zaffatah.

Elsewhere, enemy helicopters flew over the central sector and al-Nabatiyah this evening. Flares were dropped over these areas during the overflights.

Lebanon: Founding of 'Agent' Party, Decision To Disband SLA Reported

NC2203074696 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 22 Mar 96

[Dispatch by Samir 'Alamah]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [passage omitted] With the agent militias [South Lebanese Army, SLA] experiencing divisions, collapse, and sharp differences among their officials, agent Riyad al-'Abdallah announced the establishment of an agent political movement, which he called al-Asl Movement [Foundation]. Riyad al-'Abdallah has a long history as an agent, and he escaped two attacks against his motorcade in 1994.

The occupation authorities gave this agent a role to play in light of major disputes inside the Lahdist militias. According to diplomatic reports, the inner Zionist cabinet has recently decided to dissolve these agent militias, but the decision will not be made public until the appropriate time.

Lebanon: Shiite Figure Sets Up Party in Israeli-Occupied Zone

NC2103221896 Paris AFP in English 2144 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Al-Khiyam, Lebanon, March 21 (AFP) — An influential Shiite Moslem figure close to Israel announced Thursday [21 March] that he has set up a political party in an Israeli-occupied border zone of south Lebanon.

The aim of the party, called "The Foundation," is to help make Lebanon "impose its sovereignty over the whole" of the country, Riyad 'Abdallah told a press conference in his home village of al-Khiyam.

'Abdallah, who has twice been a target of attack by the Iranian-backed Shiite fundamentalist Hizballah, said the party would help "to prepare for the future" and seek good relations with both Syria and Israel.

The Jewish state occupies a buffer zone in the south while Damascus has 35,000 troops in other parts of Lebanon.

[In a related item, London MBC Television in Arabic in its 2100 GMT newscast on 21 March reports: "In the occupied area in south Lebanon Riyad 'Abdallah, who escaped two assassination attempts in al-Khiyam in 1994, has announced the formation of the Movement of Democratic Reformers, the Foundation Movement [harakat al-islahiyin al-dimuqratiyin, harakat al-asl]. Among its most prominent objectives is to make peace with Syria and Israel on the grounds of geographical continuity."]

Lebanon: Peacetime Issues for Lebanon Discussed

96AA0163A London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 18-24 Feb 96 pp 20-28

[Report by Manar-al-Huda al-Husayni]

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut—What will happen in Lebanon after peace? There is no definite answer to this question because everything depends on the progress made on the Syrian-Israeli track. However, many people agree on the issues that will be raised at the negotiation table between Beirut and Tel Aviv when the time comes. These issues will shed some light on what will happen in Lebanon in the future. The four most significant issues are:

1. The Palestinian presence in Lebanon;
2. The water;

3. The Lebanese resistance and border security;
4. The problem of the command and members of the South Lebanon Army.

Besides these issues and as a result of the coming peace, the Lebanese will face the question of economic competition between Lebanon and Israel. A person who has some expectations regarding the Lebanese-Israeli negotiations is Karim Baqraduni, deputy leader of the Phalangist Party. In an interview with AL-MAJALLAH, Baqraduni said that the issues that will be raised in the Lebanese-Israeli negotiations can be combined into three groups:

1. bilateral issues that affect Lebanon and Israel alone;
2. tripartite issues that affect Syria, Lebanon, and Israel;
3. issues for multilateral negotiations.

The first group includes the question of Israel's withdrawal from all Lebanese territory and the implementation of Resolution 425; that is, establishing security arrangements between the two countries. It also includes the issue of Maj. Gen. Antoine Lahd's militia, which collaborates with Israel, and theoretically, the issue of the resistance in Lebanon and Hizballah's existence. The Hizballah issue, actually, falls within the second group; that is, the relations among the three countries. Besides the Hizballah issue, this group includes the question of the security of Israel's borders.

Baqraduni thinks that Lebanon cannot solve the Islamic Resistance issue alone because of the existing relations between Syria and Iran and Hizballah's presence in Lebanon. It needs Syrian help in this regard. As for the responsibility for security along the Israeli border, the Lebanese Army can deploy along the Lebanese border, but it will need interim support from the Syrian Army or at least Syrian political support to initially carry out its task. The third group includes mainly the issues of water and the Palestinian refugees.

Asked whether Lebanon will pay a price for peace, Baqraduni says that the question of payment is raised as a general assumption. It depends on Lebanon's ability to rally international and regional support so it will not have to pay any price, pay a limited price, or pay something and receive something else in return. Baqraduni says that the absent and the weak are always the losers in any negotiations.

Baqraduni thinks that if the Lebanese Government does not act now, it will undoubtedly pay a price. He thinks that the present government is not preparing Lebanon to defend itself and is not trying to establish a web of relations and interests that could provide an umbrella for its citizens.

Baqraduni adds: If things change, the Lebanese will determine Lebanon's role in a post-peace era. They will establish a strategy, which the government will adopt and implement. The government will also rally all the Lebanese at home and abroad around it. This would lead to national agreement and not division, as is the situation today.

The payment of a price depends on us, Baqraduni says. If we can do what I said, Lebanon can receive a price, but if we do not agree on a vision and a strategy and do not achieve national reconciliation, Lebanon will pay the biggest price.

Observers say that the way to peace negotiations was actually opened in 1982. Any positive or negative results achieved during that year constituted the door through which the area reached what it has reached today.

In 1982, for the first time in its wars against the Arabs, Israel occupied an Arab capital, Beirut, completing its third and most extensive invasion of Lebanon from the south.

This invasion produced several results, among them the assassination of the Lebanese President-elect Bashir al-Jumayyil, the Sabra and Shatila massacre, and the Lebanese national resistance, which later became the Islamic Resistance. In Israel, the people were divided about the war and its results. Defense Minister Ari'el Sharon resigned and Yitzhaq Shamir assumed power following Menahem Begin's resignation.

Then George Bush became president of the United States. During his presidency, Iraq invaded Kuwait. The United States liberated Kuwait and U.S. forces were stationed in the Gulf. All these developments prompted the U.S. President to raise the slogan "land for peace," as the subject of Arab-Israeli negotiations. U.S. President Bush and Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev opened the Madrid Middle East Peace Conference on 3 October 1991. Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the PLO, and Israel attended the conference.

The Israelis, from the beginning, realized the importance of the Palestinian issue. The Gaza-Jericho agreement was concluded and PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat signed the Oslo Agreement in Washington. This was followed by the Wadi 'Arabah Treaty, signed by Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Rabin and Jordan's King Husayn. The Syrian-Lebanese front remained steadfast in the face of American inducements. U.S. President Bill Clinton held two meetings with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad in Geneva and Damascus, and Secretary of State Warren Christopher made several visits to Damascus.

However, President al-Asad continued to stick to the principles on whose basis he agreed to participate in the

Madrid Conference. Lebanon also continued to stick to the 1949 truce agreement and UN Resolution 425, which called for Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory without delay. Lebanon believed that there were no subjects for negotiation between Lebanon and Israel except the implementation of the UN resolutions. Until now, Lebanon has not become a principal party in the peace process negotiations.

Some people have posed the question: Should peace take place with Lebanon before, together, or after peace with Syria? The question that concerns the Lebanese, while at the threshold of peace, is what will happen in Lebanon after peace, considering that the issues for negotiation between Lebanon and Israel—the water, the resistance, security, and the Palestinian refugees — will be thorny. Observers think that Lebanon will pay the price of peace by accepting to settle the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Ambassador Fu'ad al-Turk, who served as Lebanese Foreign Ministry secretary general during the Israeli invasion and supervised the birth of resolution 425, thinks that the multilateral committees, formed to study the issues of the refugees, the water, security, and economy, will work out the details of a new Middle Eastern Order. Al-Turk thinks that the most important of these issues are the water and the Palestinian refugees.

The first issue is the resettlement of the Palestinian refugees. What will be the fate of the Palestinian refugees? Following the UN partition Resolution 181 on 29 November 1947, the establishment of the State of Israel, the expulsion of the Palestinian people from their homeland, and the occupation of their land and property, the United Nations established the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) on 21 May 1950. Besides what its name implies, UNRWA tried to merge the Palestinians in the countries in which they took refuge. Israel disregarded the many UN resolutions calling for the return of the Palestinians to their homeland.

The United Nations also issued several resolutions regarding the Palestinians displaced after the June 1967 war. The most important of these was UN Security Council Resolution 242 on 22 November 1967, which called for Israel's withdrawal to secure borders. The paragraph concerning the Palestinian refugees called for a just settlement of the refugee problem, without mentioning the nature of this settlement.

UN Security Council Resolution 338 of 22 October 1973 called for implementing all parts of Resolution 242. Resolutions 242 and 338 dealt with the Palestinian issue as a refugee and humanitarian issue and not as a political issue.

With the start of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations in Oslo and the conclusion of the Palestinian-Israeli declaration of principles agreement, which was signed on 13 September 1993, the Palestinian issue entered a new stage with regard to the refugees and displaced Palestinians. The agreement referred to a settlement based on Resolutions 242 and 338. However, the fifth article of the agreement noted that consideration of the refugee issue will be postponed for three years from the effective date of the declaration of principles agreement, because their return demands that the Palestinian Authority [PA] make plans and policies to encourage the refugees to return to their homeland. However, it seems that the PA has been unable to do that.

Therefore, Lebanese and non-Lebanese observers think that the solution will be to settle them in the host countries, although this would be far from a just solution. This opinion confirms what Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres said in his book *The New Middle East* about the rehabilitation of the refugees in the Arab countries as part of a regional economic and social plan. Peres also says that Israel has not agreed to allow the refugees of 1948 to return, but it has undertaken to solve the problem of the Palestinians who left the West Bank in June 1967. This is what was agreed upon at Camp David and Oslo.

Obviously, the refugee settlement issue has not been accepted by all the Arab countries concerned. Regarding the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, the Lebanese Government has rejected their settlement in Lebanon. Ambassador Fu'ad al-Turk says that the Lebanese Constitution clearly opposes settlement and partition. Lebanese Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz says: "The Palestinian presence in Lebanon will have a profound effect, because:

"First: Lebanon's geographical area is very small in relation to its population.
"Second: The Lebanese area that can be settled and exploited, after eliminating the mountains and deep valleys, is very small.
"Third: The Lebanese sectarian structure is very delicate. Any imbalance will have a political, social, economical, and security impact on it.
"Fourth: We think that the situation of the Palestinian refugees in the existing camps in Lebanon is basically different from their situation in some Arab countries where they live, work, and enjoy medical and educational security."

The Palestinians in Lebanon constitute 10 percent of the population. They can cause a social and political burden. Because most of the refugees are Sunni Muslims, their presence in Lebanon will affect the sectarian balance.

Dr. George Dib, a political analyst and foreign affairs' adviser to the late Prime Minister Rashid Karami, says no one has a prepackaged solution to this problem. The Palestinian presence in Lebanon was established in the Camp David agreement and the Oslo Agreement. The first agreement said that a committee composed of representatives of Jordan, Palestine, Egypt, and Israel will be established, and those who wish to return must submit applications to this committee. Only those who left after 1967 will be entitled to submit applications. The committee will make its decisions unanimously. A provision in the Oslo Agreement confirms this text. This means that those who left Palestine before 1967 will be deprived of their right to return because they cannot submit applications. The applications of Palestinians who left after 1967 will be considered and their applications must be accepted unanimously. This means that even if all the Arab representatives approved them, Israel can veto them. Dr. Dib adds that the committee is currently working on the level of ambassadors. It is not taking applications now, because the parties are still trying to decide who is a refugee and who is not. Dr. Dib thinks that the confirmation in the Oslo Agreement means that there is an agreement to settle the Palestinians. The post-peace era will bring every inch of Lebanese territory under the control of the Lebanese Government. If a solution is reached regarding the Palestinians' presence, it will not provide for their return.

Ambassador al-Turk emphasizes the Lebanese constitution's provision against settlement and partition. Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi also emphasized this point when he told the diplomatic corps that all the Lebanese people agree on this matter.

The second issue is the water, which is no less important than the first. Since its establishment Israel has tried to carry out projects and plans and submit proposals to control Arab water resources, including the Jordan River and its tributaries that start in Syria and Lebanon and al-Litani River that starts and ends in Lebanon. Israel has done that to facilitate the absorption of millions of Jews from all over the world in Palestine. In 1938, Walter Kelly Laudermilk, a U.S. expert on land and irrigation, drew up a master plan to divert the al-Litani River water. The plan called for diverting the water via Palestinian territory (which is lower than the adjacent Lebanese territory) to an artificial lake that will be built in the 'Arrabat al-Batuf plain, north of Nazareth. The water will then be channeled to the Negev desert to irrigate and reclaim it.

In 1948, a Jewish company submitted a plan to the Lebanese Government, under President Alfred Naqqash, and requested a concession to exploit all the water sources in Lebanon, including the al-Litani River. The plan called for supplying the Lebanese cities with water and electricity and diverting the surplus water to Palestine. The Lebanese Government rejected this Jewish offer. However, Israel continued its attempts and obtained some Lebanese water by illegitimate means.

What will be the fate of Lebanese water after peace? Baqraduni says: "There are laws about water resources and their exploitation and distribution. The main principle on which all the water theories in international law are built is to give each country the quantity of water it needs, provided that country uses its share. Other countries should be free to exploit any unexploited water. Israel sticks to this law because Lebanon is like a camel that carries the water on its back but is very thirsty. Lebanon is wasting its water by allowing it to flow into the sea. It is not exploiting its water resources and not getting what it needs." Therefore, Baqraduni thinks that the government must draw up a comprehensive plan to exploit the country's water resources to meet present and future needs for drinking water, agriculture, irrigation, industry, and power generation. He says that a settlement without such a plan will be at the "expense of our water resources, because we waste large part of it in the sea, and this will be Israel's excuse."

Baqraduni compares the negotiations with world football games. He says that "the more a team trains, the better chance of success it will have. The same is in negotiations. The more carefully Lebanon studies its files, the better chance it will have to win and not yield." Ambassador al-Turk confirms this view, saying: "Israel says it has no ambitions in Lebanese territory or water. Nevertheless, the Lebanese Government must prepare a plan to exploit our water resources. It should not leave it for the Israelis to exploit."

Dr. Dib says that legally, "the waters that spring in the territory of a state and flow in the sea of the same state, without passing through the territory of another party, are subject to the policies of that state." He thinks that Lebanon must insist on this legal principle, despite Israel's claim that "geologically, a basin is located at the foot of Mount Hermon, which primarily feeds the mountain and then supplies the water to al-Litani, al-Yarmuk, and the Jordan Rivers; that is, the three rivers take water from one source, and this is what God wanted, so why should man separate what God has united." Dr. Dib expects Israel to demand the formation of a joint Israeli-Jordanian-Syrian-Lebanese committee to supervise the distribution of water. There is nothing to prevent Lebanon from concluding agreements to sell its water. It must not allow Israel to exploit it without a price.

Economic Expert Marwan Iskandar thinks that Lebanon must pay complete attention to its water resources, because they are the most important economic resource it has. Lebanon is the only country in the Middle East that has surplus water exceeding its population's future needs.

Iskandar thinks that after the year 2000, the countries of the Middle East, except Lebanon, will suffer from water shortage. No program has been undertaken yet to deal with this situation. He adds that Water and Electricity Minister Ilyas Hubayqah has submitted a plan to the National Water Affairs Authority dealing with the water situation. This is an important asset, which Lebanon can market to Syria and Israel. Syria needs it, and Lebanon can exchange it for Syrian gas, which can be used in power generation. Lebanon can also sell its water to Israel for more than $400 million.

The third issue is the Islamic Resistance and Hizballah. What will happen to the resistance after peace? According to diplomatic reports in Beirut, some pro-Iran Hizballah leaders started intensive talks with the Iranian leadership after the peace process reached a sensitive juncture requiring a review of Hizballah's political situation.

Political observers think that one cannot talk about Hizballah's future in Lebanon without considering the developments in Iranian-Syrian relations, which could become lukewarm if the Syrian-Israeli peace talks succeed. This is because Iran is against the peace negotiations. These observers base their view on the break that took place in the relations between Tehran and Cairo following the peace negotiations between Egypt and Israel in 1979.

However, informed sources think that the same thing will not happen with Damascus. A break in the relations with Syria will be harmful to Iran, which is facing U.S. and Israeli pressures and Damascus can play an important role in easing this pressure. Furthermore, Damascus considers the resistance in South Lebanon as an important card. So, it will need the support of the Iranian Government, which has a strong influence on Hizballah. In other words, Tehran will be indirectly present in any peace agreement signed between Tel Aviv and Damascus. Syria wants its position to be strong in this agreement and wants this agreement to be fair.

Explaining the situation of the Islamic Resistance and Hizballah after peace, Hizballah's Spiritual Guide 'Allamah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah says: "A settlement might create problems for the Islamic Resistance. The Islamic movement might not find room for itself, if Lebanon was liberated from Israeli occupation, because it would have accomplished its objectives. However, it is making plans to deal with the problems in the long-range and join forces with other Islamic movements to begin a new round against the Jews to expel them from Palestine, even after 20 years."

Fadlallah adds: "I am still optimistic about the future of the Islamic movement in the world. If they close a door in our face, God will open one thousand doors to us. If they surround us in a field, God will open many fields for us. As long as we are with God, He will be with us."

Dr. Dib thinks that Hizballah will be ready to stop fighting and become a political party after Israel withdraws from Lebanon. However, the question is: Will Israel accept this situation?

Dr. Dib says: "Of course Israel will not accept this situation, at least initially. Therefore, Israel will insist on obtaining Syrian assurances." He thinks that Peres has asked U.S. President Bill Clinton to seek Syrian protection in South Lebanon. Dib adds that what matters is not the Israeli request, but the Syrian response. Syria is expected to stress that Lebanon is an independent state and has its own government, and that this request must be submitted to the Lebanese government. If this happens, Syria will respond to Lebanon's request based on the friendship between the two countries. Damascus is legally bound to respond to the Lebanese request according to the Brotherhood, Cooperation, and Coordination Treaty. There is no fear about the deployment of the Syrian army in Lebanon.

Dib adds: "Hizballah could be more responsive to Iran than to Syria. Iran is against the peace process. If Syria and Israel reach an agreement, Iran's position toward Syria will reflect on Hizballah. Dib thinks that any thinking about creating a problem means one thing: the questioner underestimates the thoughts of the Iranian leaders. Iran is not ready to have a disagreement with Syria in areas under Syrian influence. Iran is currently isolated from the Western world. One day it will need this world, particularly the United States, and Syria can play a major role in this respect through its friendly relations.

Ambassador al-Turk thinks that the issue of Hizballah, as a political party, will not be raised in the negotiations. It will be discussed as a military organization. After peace, Hizballah will change from a military to a political resistance movement. Hizballah will become a political party like all the other parties in Lebanon.

The fourth issue is the Lebanese-Syrian border security. The security issue in South Lebanon leads to a possible Syrian role in controlling the situation after peace.

According to political sources, a cooperation formula must be worked out between the Lebanese and Syrian armies. However, this could affect the internal situation during an interim period in Lebanon. The situation in the South is considered a test for the intentions of the parties interested in the peace process. Lebanese President Ilyas al-Hirawi has repeatedly stressed his assurance that not one shot will be fired at Israel after it ends its occupation of the South. He also stressed that no one other than the Lebanese Army will remain in South Lebanon when peace is established. This is a restatement of the substance of Resolution 425, which states that the Lebanese government forces, in cooperation with UN forces, will maintain security in the area following the withdrawal of the Israeli forces.

Observers think that by trying to raise the issue of security arrangements as a main topic in the negotiations with Lebanon, Israel is suggesting that the Lebanese Government is unable to maintain security in the area after its withdrawal. Consequently, Lebanon would need the help of the Syrian forces, because they are in Lebanon and have the experience and firmness to deal with armed groups, if they try to disturb the peace. Diplomatic sources think that a buffer force can be established along the border with Israel to monitor and prevent any violation of the peace treaties. This buffer force can come from Lebanon, Syria, and Israel or be multinational. The buffer force can be French or include French forces. France has recently said it is prepared to station French forces along the border with Lebanon and Syria.

Diplomatic observers fear that Israel might try to complicate a solution to the South Lebanon Army issue by comparing it with the resistance and Hizballah issue. Expressing this view during a visit to Bint Jubayl, in South Lebanon, after a Lebanese court issued an arrest warrant for Commander of the South Lebanon Army Antoine Lahd, Israeli Agriculture Minister Ya'aqov Tsur said that the Israeli government will continue to help the people in the border area because the relations between the two are based on many years of joint action.

Lebanese Defense Minister Muhsin Dallul rejected Israel's condition that the future of Agent Lahd should be guaranteed before it will conclude a peace agreement with Lebanon. He said that Lebanon will not accept any condition that affects our national beliefs. Minister Dallul said: "Lahd and his followers are traitors. They committed high treason and killed our children, women, and people. Not long ago, the Rabin government asked the Knesset to withdraw the citizenship of an Israeli, because he collaborated with an Arab intelligence service. Don't we have the right to say that there is no place here for someone who killed our people and made himself an agent of the Israelis who occupy our land?" Regarding the Lahd militia members, Minister Dallul said that their fate will be the same as the fate of the Europeans who collaborated with the Germans during World War I. Some were acquitted, some were imprisoned, and some were executed.

Regarding the effects of peace on the economic situation in Lebanon, Economic Expert Dr. Marwan Iskandar says: "Israel is not seeking to sell vegetables and fruits in the Arab world and Lebanon. In the past five years, Israel changed its production structure and electronics now constitute $7 billion out of $15 billion in exports. This is besides $2 billion in cut diamonds, which it imports from South Africa. Israel also remanufactures and exports about $2 billion of petrochemical products. When Israel starts importing between 2 and 3 million tons of Qatari gas, it will expand its petrochemical industry.

Dr. Iskandar adds that Israel is mainly interested in energy and transportation projects. Lebanon will be affected, because it was a transit center in the Middle East. Israel has been active in the communications field since the arrival in Israel of about 400,000 Russian Jews, including 40,000 doctors of physics, chemistry, mathematics, natural sciences, and computer science. This created an important human asset. Israel decreased prices, and this gave it a big push in the past five years. Furthermore, Washington increased its aid to Tel Aviv from $3 billion to $6 billion annually following the Madrid Conference in October 1991. This means that during the past five years Israel received $30 billion. Lebanon has been asking for $2 billion in aid, but has so far received nothing.

Dr. Iskandar thinks that Israel will compete with Lebanon in the media and communication field. It recently concluded an agreement with media magnet Robert Murdoch to provide fast communications and information at lower costs. There will also be competition in the petrochemical industry field, as Israel is trying to become an important center for petrochemical industries through its agreement with Qatar and the rehabilitation of a pipeline, built in 1948 between Iraq and Haifa, after the United Nations lifts the blockade on Iraq.

Dr. Iskandar thinks that peace is coming, because Israel has begun to realize that the United States will not continue to provide aid to it and that it must depend on itself and on transportation, energy, tourism, and communication projects and lower its military spending.

Baqraduni, however, thinks that Lebanese-Israeli competition, as in all the world, will be in the field of water and space.

Competition in space will include everything called "the information superhighway." The competition will be fierce between those who can collect, store, and market information. This field will produce the best income in future international trade, which will depend on data storage. States will not be classified as industrial or agricultural, but as possessing or not possessing such information.

The basic means for the possession of information will be space. Israel is undoubtedly investing vast efforts in this field. Baqraduni thinks that Lebanon should not waste its rights in space because of some internal conflicts, "because the competitions that await us are much more important than what is happening at home."

Syria: U.S., Russia Urged To Put Peace Process 'Back on Track'

JN2203084096 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0550 GMT 22 Mar 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] In a commentary today, AL-THAWRAH says: Syria proved to the whole world its sure desire for peace and its eagerness to achieve it and preserve its principles, primarily full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan to the 4 June 1967 lines and the implementation of Security Council Resolution 425 on southern Lebanon. Peace must also be just and comprehensive so it can last. While reiterating its adherence to real peace, Syria reaffirms that its steps toward peace will be compatible with Israeli steps. As always, Israel is responsible for the halt in the talks this time. This is because it suspended the talks and began to impose new conditions for their resumption. These conditions are totally unrelated to the principles of the peace process. Israel suspended its participation in the Maryland talks to evade any commitment to the principles of peace.

AL-THAWRAH notes that partial solutions are fragile and have negative consequences. The Sharm al-Shaykh conference was held to support Israel. The Israeli Knesset endorsed a draft resolution that affirms the annexation of the occupied Golan and Jerusalem, contrary to realities and to all UN resolutions and laws.

AL-THAWRAH adds: This conference was an election rally in support of Israel and Peres. It was a passport for Israel, which it is now using very well in its arrest campaigns, demolition of homes, and all other forms of terrorism in the occupied territories. It is also using this passport to escalate its aggression against southern Lebanon and impose impossible conditions for the resumption of the peace process.

AL-THAWRAH stresses that Syria wants peace and is working to achieve it. Syria is committed to the principles of peace, on which the Madrid conference was based. Syria calls on the two sponsors of the Madrid conference to resume the Madrid conference because over the past four and a half years, Israel has been trying to derail the conference from its main objective and foundations.

AL-THAWRAH concludes: The United States and Russia are responsible for putting the peace process back on track and implementing the principles of the Madrid peace process, based on the Security Council resolutions and the land-for-peace principle.

In another commentary, AL-THAWRAH says: The recent pretexts used by Israel to recall its delegation and suspend the Maryland talks — and then Israeli Prime Minister Shim'on Peres's attempts to blame Syria for this — are objectionable. Israel is trying to mislead the world and distract its attention from the peace principles and requirements and the need for it to be just and comprehensive, based on full implementation of Security Council resolutions and withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines. The world, however, is fully aware of the futility of Israel's performance and the impossibility of achieving anything that serves the cause of peace, security, and stability in the region while such a maneuvering Israeli mentality is in control.

AL-THAWRAH says Israel's adherence to partial and incomplete solutions and its attempts to make gains at the expense of Arab land, right, and security amount to deliberate insistence on assassinating peace, blowing up the peace process, and maintaining tension and violence.

AL-THAWRAH concludes that Syria asserted that a just and comprehensive peace, based on the resolutions of international legitimacy and the Madrid frame of reference, is the practical remedy to tension in the region. It is the only way to end the cycle of violence and counterviolence and achieve security and stability.

Syria: Radio Reiterates Call For Reconvening Madrid Conference

JN2103170796 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1230 GMT 21 Mar 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dear listeners: Nobody can claim that the tense and even volatile situation in the occupied Arab territories came from a vacuum. On the contrary, this situation exists because Israel is occupying these territories and because successive Israeli governments made Israeli society believe that these territories are not for their legitimate owners and that the legitimate owners of the land have no rights at all.

Israel became a party to the peace process as a result of the Madrid conference. Israel should have kept Israeli society away from expansionist trends and the spirit of arrogance, and should have made it realize that peace means returning usurped rights to their owners and respecting international law, UN resolutions, and the UN Charter, which prevents forcible annexation of territories.

This is what the Israeli governments should have done. Is the present Israeli Government doing this or at least some of it? The answer is not in the interest of the peace process, nor does it facilitate this process. The maximum flexibility displayed by the Israeli Government was when it described withdrawal from the occupied Golan according to the Security Council resolutions as a difficult and painful decision and a concession, although such a withdrawal does not constitute any concession. This Israeli tone is not in line with peace.

Israel's position is now further away than ever from the peace requirements, on the understanding that this position never came tangibly close to these requirements. Israel's politicians inside or outside the Israeli Government are competing in making statements and leveling threats of all types and in all directions. Moreover, Israel is continuing its ruthless violations of Lebanon's sovereignty and its aggressions against the fraternal Lebanese territories and people, because Lebanon refuses to accept Israel's occupation of its national soil.

If Israel really wants peace according to the land for peace principle, it should declare its acceptance of total withdrawal to beyond the 4 June 1967 lines without leaving any trace of occupation, such as settlements. Israel not only ignores this primary peace condition, but also announces a new settlement plan in the Golan. This announcement, which obstructs the peace process, came after Israel's decision to suspend or freeze its participation in the Maryland talks as a result of the recent bombings. This emphasizes that Israel has not decided that comprehensive peace is a strategic option, as Syria did. It should be known, however, that everybody has an interest in peace and that such a peace cannot be dispensed with by any party.

Over the past four and a half years of the peace process, many obstacles and a thick fog have accumulated on the road to peace as a result of Israel's intransigence and refusal to declare its readiness to carry out a total withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories. Moreover, Israel is maneuvering, procrastinating, and setting impossible conditions. Throughout the peace process, Israel also placed peripheral issues over priorities, consequences over causes, and ends over beginnings, contrary to logical thought or sound measures on the road to peace.

This situation is blocking progress on the road to peace, and proves the soundness and necessity of Syria's request to reconvene the Madrid conference to define the party that is responsible for the current situation and to remove the obstacles that have accumulated on the road to peace.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: London Paper Interviews Rabbani

MM2103141796 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 20 Mar 96 p 8

[Interview with Afghan President Borhanoddin Rabbani by Muwaffaq Zaydan at the Afghan Presidential Palace in Kabul; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Zaydan] You have been holding talks with Hezb-e Eslami for some time. Have you reached any results?

[Rabbani] The talks between us and the brothers in Hezb-e Eslami have reached a very advanced stage. God willing, we will announce the results in the near future. These negotiations will be the pivot for the establishment of peace among everbody and the resolution of all pending issues and all Afghanstan's problems.

[Zaydan] Have you reached a specific formula for power-sharing?

[Rabbani] The important thing is not the sharing of power but rather the resolution of the pending issues and problems and the creation of a favorable climate for narrowing differences of views and the exertion of joint efforts for the establishment of peace and stability in the country. As to power and the like, these only provide the mechanism needed for the realization of the common objectives.

[Zaydan] Will the negotiations be confined to the Hezb-e Eslami party alone or will they include other opposition elements?

[Rabbani] As I have already said, the main aim of the negotiations is to find a pivot for peace. We do not want this pivot to be a front against others. Rather, we call upon the others to join us in all matters that lead to the bringing of security and stability to the country, the establishment of a stable state in it, the facing up to the plots which are aimed at the Mojahedin and the unity of the country and the stability of the Afghan people. For these reasons, we do not want to form a front against the others but rather a center for the rallying of all the brothers together. We ask the other brothers to resolve their problems with the state through dialogue and not through armed struggle and fighting, which will lead to nothing and which will not resolve any problems.

[Zaydan] The opposition has long been accusing you of clinging to power. Do the negotiations with the opposition mean that you will continue to be president of the country?

[Rabbani] Since we assumed power in accordance with the covenant and charter that we agreed upon and following the Peshawar treaty, it was agreed that my presidency would initially be for a term of four months, during which we would arrange for a meeting of influential figures. But that period proved insufficient. So I summoned a meeting of members of the command council and told them that my term of office had expired and that they should look for a successor for me. But they unanimously decided to extend my term of office by one and a half months. We drew up a plan to convene a meeting of the influential figures, which then convened and was attended by all sides. Delegations were sent to the provinces to summon delegates from these provinces. However, following the announcement of the convocation of the council, differences arose. We said at the time: If the brothers do not approve of this, then let us raise the matter [of the extension of my presidency] again. So we went to Islamabad and the brothers decided to extend my term of office by one and a half years.

Prior to the expiry of this [extended] term, I summoned the brothers to decide on who should succeed me. When only 10 days remained of my presidency, I suggested transferring power to the chief justice in accordance with tradition and custom, but some sides objected to this.

[Zaydan] How did you continue in power after that?

[Rabbani] The UN delegate in Islamabad contacted foreign ministry officials and conveyed to them a message in which he asked them not to transfer authority as he had been asked to mediate between the various sides so there should be grounds for the transfer of authority by specifying the quarters who could assume it and the nature of the system to be used.

I have said and I continue to say that they should set up a system and mechanism for dealing with the question of the transfer of power, otherwise chaos will reign, and that power cannot be transferred under conditions of fighting. We had no plans to cling to power. We have called and continue to call for reform through dialogue and the resolution of problems and the establishment of a truce. For we cannot achieve anything in a climate of collision.

[Zaydan] You seem optimistic about reaching an agreement with the opposition. Do you have any guarantees that would prevent a repetition of the tragedies and conflicts of the past?

[Rabbani] We now feel that there is seriousness and credibility on the part of the fraternal (opposition) elements. For all the parties have become convinced that conflicts will bring no good and that if matters are tackled with sincerity, truthfulness and freedom, they will provide sufficient guarantees.

[Zaydan] The Taleban Movement, which came into being about a year and a half ago, has succeeded in controlling half of the country's territory. How did this happen?

[Rabbani] The fact of the matter is that the Taleban is only a facade behind which hide all those who bear a grudge against Islam, the Jihad, and Jihad organizations. The enemies of Islam, of the people, and of the Mojahedin are the ones who rallied this group together to use it in the plot against the Afghan people, the Jihad, and the Mojahedin, in an attempt to seek revenge on the Mojahedin and distort the image of the Jihad following the failure of their past conspiracies. They wanted to keep power away from the hand of the Mojahedin and place it in the hands of non-Muslims. It was for this reason that they chose people who are ostensibly students of religious sciences while in fact they are against Islam and the Muslims. This is evident from their actions. As to the question of their implementation of the Islamic religious laws which they claim to be pursuing, it is in fact no more than an attempt to give a bad image to the religious laws through their implementation of these laws in a wrong manner. Taleban is indeed nothing but a plot by the enemies of Islam. There is no doubt that students with limited knowledge are being used so far, but we do not know who steers them and who directs and commands them. They are always unable to decide anything, and whenever we talk to them and put questions to them, they defer their replies and say they have to hold consultations before they can reply. But certainly they have no consultative council but rather some people who dictate things and issue instructions to them. Matters are not in their hands.

[Zaydan] If this is so, how then did they manage to win?

[Rabbani] This was achieved inadvertently without the knowledge of the Mojahedin. Those who brought in the Taleban put on a skillful show. They said that they want to resolve some problems and face up to the corrupt elements. So many of the Jihad parties told them this too is their objective, namely to combat evil deeds, and so they welcomed the Taleban and said that any of the Mojahedin who commits a sin should be liquidated. Thus the Mojahedin parties open the field widely before them. With foreign material, morale, and sometimes manpower support, the Taleban succeeded in achieving what they have achieved. But they have been exposed and everybody now knows what the Taleban Movement is and who stands behind it.

[Zaydan] Some people believe that the Taleban Movement has been paving the way for the return of the former Afghan king, Zaher Shah. Do you agree with this view?

[Rabbani] Undoubtedly the enemies of Jihad and the Muslim Afghan people want this movement to pave the way for all those who oppose Islam and the Muslims without specifying any particular person. All attempts aimed at the destruction of the Jihad and the Mojahedin operate with support from outside. The Taleban Movement is being used in the same way.

[Zaydan] Your relations with Pakistan have deteriorated recently, despite the fact that Pakistan had sided with the Afghan Jihad for many long years. Are efforts being exerted to reconcile the two sides and rebuild relations?

[Rabbani] Pakistan is a Muslim neighbor and the Pakistani people are Muslim people toward whom we hold all respect because they share the struggle with us and have endured so much as a result of that. We do not forget this as Muslims and as neighbors and as truthful people. We always want to have good relations with the Pakistani people. It was for this reason that during the Islamabad meeting (ICO summit), we asked Pakistani officials to participate in the formation of a committee from both sides to discuss the contentious issues. But unfortunately there are certain quarters within the ruling regime (in Islamabad) who are bent on creating problems and refusing any meeting between the two peoples and the two countries. Yet, we continue to seek the building of relations with the Pakistani Government and particularly with the Pakistani people with a view to safeguarding the fraternal relations between the two countries.

[Zaydan] Some observers believe that two international camps are dealing with Afghanstan: the first consists of Russia, India, and Iran, and this camp supports the Afghan Government, while the second consists of the United States and Pakistan and also includes the opposition. What have you to say about this?

[Rabbani] There is a well-known rule that says that every independent sovereign state has the right to establish mutual diplomatic relations and interests with all countries. For this reason, we in Afghanstan want our relations with our neighbors to be good but without detracting from our principles. It is for this reason too that in establishing relations with other countries and in exchanging diplomatic relations and establishing joint cooperation with them, we do not deviate from that rule, no more and no less. As to the other sides, undoubtedly there are certain quarters which are anxious to create problems in Afghanstan, using certain well-known parties for the purpose, and to launch propaganda campaigns against us. However, we do not believe in political axes which lead to the destabilization of the region. We want our relations with all to be good but without interference by any country in the internal affairs of the other.

[Zaydan] Afghanstan's name has been placed on a black list that contains the names of six countries, including Iran, in which drugs are found on a large scale. Did you discuss this matter with officials in Tehran during your visit to Iran?

[Rabbani] It is a well-known fact that we are fighting the phenomenon of drugs in terms of both to its spread and smuggling. We have arrested many smugglers in various areas. As is known, prior to the Taleban attack on Harah [as transliterated] and other places, the responsible officials there had collected a quantity of drugs and heroin and destroyed them. But when the Taleban seized that region, they began to market drugs and smuggle them abroad. Hence it is not fair for the name of Afghanstan to be placed on that list under the present conditions which the central government is facing as a result of the foreign plot to destabilize conditions in the country. We believe that other quarters outside Afghanstan have been helping the drug smugglers in the regions that fall outside the control of the central government.

[Zaydan] What are the results of your recent tour of Iran, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan?

[Rabbani] Our aim from the tour is to urge the neighboring countries to participate in the peace process. Indeed, some of these countries have actually embarked on some moves in this regard. Iranian delegations have come to Afghanistan and visited several regions here and expressed readiness to mediate. Likewise, Turkmenistan has sent signals indicating its readiness to play host to a meeting of the opposition and the government. We have noted that all the neighboring countries wish to unite the Afghan people and resolve the problems among them. This is only natural among countries with common interests.

As to my visit to Tajikistan, it dealt with the question of the Tajikistan opposition and the Tajikistan immigrants now living in northern Afghanistan. We have hosted the Tajikistan government as well as the Tajikistan opposition. During this visit, we offered to host a second conference to be attended by the Tajikistan president and opposition to resolve problems between them so that stability and security would prevail the region in the interest of all.

[Zaydan] What was the response of the Tajikistani Government?

[Rabbani] It accepted the invitation, and its President Ali [as published] Rakhmanov expressed his readiness to meet with the opposition once more.

[Zaydan] How do you evaluate your relations with the government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia?

[Rabbani] We thank all the countries that shared our days of struggle with us, foremost of whom is the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which shared these days with us. We had great hopes that it would play an effective role following the establishment of the Islamic state in Afghanstan. We hold the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in high esteem for all that it has given us during the days of immigration and Jihad.

Afghanistan: Taleban Rockets Kill 1, Wound 8

LD2103154196 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1430 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Taleban group fired a barrage of rockets today at residential areas of the city. The exchange of heavy weapons fire is continuing in the south and west of Kabul city. BAKHTAR reports that Benazir Bhutto's Taleban, in firing 18 rockets today, martyred one person and wounded another eight. Several residential houses also sustained damage.

The exchange of heavy weapons fire started this morning in the south and west of Kabul and continued until late afternoon. An armed forces source said that army units responded to the heavy weapons fire by the Taleban group.

Afghanistan: Pakistan Encourages Taleban in Military Moves

LD2103190996 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Dari 1620 GMT 21 Mar 96

[Commentary by BAKHTAR political commentator]

[FBIS Translated Text] The Taleban group's warmongering policy is totally inconsistent with the wish and will of the people of Afghanistan to restore peace in the country. The Taleban group, in insisting on fighting, have thus far replied negatively to dozens of peace proposals offered by the Islamic State of Afghanistan [ISA]. The military moves of this group (? are still continuing) at the present time. They have not yet learned a lesson from their past defeats. By embarking on fighting, they try every day to block the road to peace in Afghanistan.

Can one ask a question about the hidden objective behind the Taleban's unsuccessful attempts? The inclination of the opposition forces to move closer to the Islamic government is now a source of worry for Benazir

Bhutto's government. (? Hence efforts) are under way to make an imposed war flare up around Kabul in order to disrupt the process of talks among Afghans. Benazir Bhutto knows very well that in the event of understanding among Afghans, her (? puppet) group would no longer have any role in the country's military situation. Because of this, she is encouraging this group to continue their military moves. Perhaps, they [Pakistanis] may think they will benefit from preventing peace in Afghanistan. But, as far as experience shows, they might be faced with a completely different result contrary to their way of thinking.

At the present time, all political groups (? believe) that the only reliable source of peace is the ISA's side. This group, which is standing against the state, has declared its animosity toward all jihadi foundations.

(? Everyone knows) that military means cannot resolve Afghanistan's problems; therefore, Taleban's insistence on imposing war on Afghanistan's people, will, in fact, accelerate the process of talks and inter-Afghan understanding.

The experience gained from the recent rounds of fighting indicates that the mercenary group is not in a position to gain anything in the [word indistinct]. Therefore, insisting on fighting will not enable the enemies of the people to achieve their objectives. [words indistinct]

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Bill for Caretaker Government Presented in Parliament

BK2103135096 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1200 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The parliament session resumed this afternoon after a day's recess under the chairmanship of Speaker Sheikh Razzak Ali. Zamiruddin Sirkar, minister for law, justice and parliamentary affairs, presented the 13th constitutional amendment bill, 1996. Among others things, the bill refers to the setting up of a caretaker government to assist the Election Commission in the conduct of all future parliamentary elections under a non-party caretaker government. The proposed caretaker government will comprise more than 10 advisers and will be headed by a chief adviser. It will be accountable to the president for its day-to-day operation.

Earlier, Home Minister Khondaker Mosharraf Hussain told parliament that the government is committed to maintaining law and order in the country at any cost. He was replying to a call-attention resolution by Mohammad Mujibur Rahman. The mover of the resolution urged that immediate steps be taken for a quick improvement of the law and order situation by (?restoring) social peace and the country's economy so as to ensure the security of life and property.

The home minister said that the Bangladesh Rifles and Ansar paramilitary force battalions have been deployed along with police to maintain a normal law and order situation. In addition, (?Army) personnel have been deployed to maintain the normal functioning of the Chittagong port. Moreover, the Army was deployed yesterday in Dhaka and Chittagong metropolitan areas to maintain law and order and to ensure movement of (?trains) and other automobiles. Strongly criticizing the activities of some opposition parties conducted in the name of the strike and noncooperation, he said that these programs are aimed at causing real damage to the national economy. He said it is a deep conspiracy to disrupt the people's normal life and to ruin the nation's future by closing down the educational institutions.

The home minister called upon all political parties, professional organizations, and the people to rise above their petty interests and come forward to resist these antipeople activities in the greater interest of the nation. He appealed to them to cooperate in (?implementing) the steps taken by the government to thwart these unlawful activities and to maintain law and order. Mosharraf Hussain expressed the hope that the people's wholehearted cooperation and support would lead to normalization of the prevailing situation, thereby enabling the people to lead a normal life.

The house also disposed of another call-attention notice by Sheikh Mujubur Rahman. It urged the relevant ministry to take the necessary steps to save more than 100,000 acres of land in Manglahat, Khitirhat, Pundua under the Shitalmati police station in Bagerhat District, and in Kodalia District from waterlogging and salinity.

The house was in session when the last reports came in.

Bangladesh: Dhaka, Chittagong Residents Asked To Resume Normal Life

BK2203065196 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In a press note today, the government said that the law and order situation in Dhaka and Chittagong metropolitan cities has significantly improved following the strengthening of security measures in the two cities. In this context, the government has called upon people from all walks of life in Dhaka and Chittagong metropolitan areas to resume their normal life by reopening shops, business establishments, and educational institutions and bringing commercial and personal vehicles onto the street. The press note said that legal and punitive steps will be taken against anyone engaged in unlawful and violent activities that might hamper peace and order in public life.

A high-level meeting chaired by Finance Minister M. Saifur Rahman in Dhaka today reviewed the prevailing situation in economic, commercial and industrial sectors in view of the opposition's current noncooperation program. The finance minister expressed deep concern over the extensive difficulties in and damage to the country's economic, commercial and industrial sectors. Saifur Rahman said that it is very unfortunate that all the agitations of the opposition are targeted against the country's economy. It is not responsible and healthy politics. The meeting was informed that a temporary deadlock had occurred in interbank transactions and money transfer due to the opposition's noncooperation program. The meeting was also informed that work at the central bank's clearing house during the past few days had returned to normal and the government will take the necessary steps to ensure normal money transfer.

Bangladesh: Steps Taken To End 'Deadlock' at Chittagong Port

BK2203120796 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The government has made a number of decisions to end the deadlock at the Chittagong port. This was stated in a release in Dhaka today. The decisions include waiving of port penalty charge and regular charge, and total waiving of warehouse charge for items stored at the port. These facilities will be valid for next 15 days. Steps have been taken to ensure loading and unloading of goods at the port, security arrangements for port users, and safe transportation of goods from the port. Steps have also been taken to keep all port-related offices, including the port bank and customs offices, open 24 hours. Importers and exporters have been requested to avail of these facilities.

Loading and unloading of goods at Mongla port was normal today. An official release said that 30 laborer groups took part in loading and unloading of goods in the first shift. Three ships were scheduled to leave the port today. Nearly 8,000 metric tonnes of goods were loaded and unloaded yesterday.

India

India: Spokesman Cautions U.S. Against Arms to Pakistan

BK2103161596 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has again cautioned the U.S. against transfer of large quantities of sophisticated arms to Pakistan, which could trigger an arms race in South Asia. Responding to queries on reports appearing in Washington dailies, a spokesman of the External Affairs Ministry said the reported U.S. decision to transfer the arms will force New Delhi to divert its scarce resources from developmental activities. He said the assertion that supply of the arms package will enable greater influence over Pakistan has been belied as it has not helped to contain Islamabad's nuclear weapons program. New Delhi expects that Washington will take into account all facts, including the recent acquiring of ring magnets by Pakistan for its nuclear program before considering the transfer of such arms.

In an interview, Senator Larry Pressler asserted that the U.S. Administration does not have a nonproliferation policy anymore but only an arms bazaar. He said it is strange that an administration which was supposed to devote to nonproliferation made this decision.

India: U.S. Seen Reluctant To Oppose Sino-Pakistan Nuclear Ties

BK2203053396 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 19 Mar 96 p 11

[Article by Seema Sirohi: "Lords of the Rings: The U.S. Is Reluctant To Crack Down on Sino-Pakistani Nuclear Links"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In each episode of Uncle Sam meets the dragon, it is the former who tips his hat and bows. China tests the United Status's limits, stretches them like dough and then simply goes about its business. If there is any country that openly flouts United States supremacy, it is China.

The Chinese sale of 5,000 nuclear ring magnets to Pakistan late last year represents a flagrant violation of not only international nonproliferation treaties but at least four US laws.

So far the administration of Bill Clinton has only wrung its hands in public.

The US president, Bill Clinton, the original waffler, can hardly be expected to act firmly in the face of a fire breathing Beijing. Having made the Democratic Party a clone of the Republican Party, it is too much to expect him to stand up to the party mandarins of Beijing.

Clinton had accused George Bush in 1992 of coddling Chinese dictators to protect US business interests. The same man spoke passionately about the plight of the Bosnians but took until the end of his term to do something about it. Now that he is president he has allowed US corporations investing in China to get in the way of action and sanctions.

US policy is being held hostage to the profits of Boeing, AT&T, Westinghouse and other companies awarded contracts in China. The US commerce secretary, Ron Brown, said as much when the issue of sanctions first came up. Pakistan, content to watch from the sidelines, will benefit from this struggle between principles and profit.

It is not just that the Clinton administration is having a difficult time deciding whether or not to impose sanctions. It is faced with a foreign policy vacuum toward China and south Asia, a vacuum that leaves it struggling to breath whenever a crisis breaks out in either region.

Crisis by crisis management often lands the US in the kind of delicate dilemma it currently finds itself. It wants to be everything to everyone — be friends with China, India and Pakistan. In the end it annoys all and does not achieve its stated goal — in this case, presumably, nonproliferation.

China's top brass has simply informed Clinton that it will not stand for any sanctions. It will not even tolerate the announcement of sanctions followed by their immediate withdrawal.

The present shadow puppetry matches the ingenious way the Clinton administration forgave China and Pakistan the last time Beijing sold 30 M-11 missiles to Islamabad. There was all kinds of evidence- satellite photos, intercepted communications and intelligence reports — to support the belief that Pakistan's Sargodha air force base was the destination for the missiles.

The state department, however, did not find the evidence convincing enough after it struck a deal with Pakistan by which the later undertook to not take the missiles out of the boxes. As long as the armament was not "seen" Washington could go on pretending they didn't exist.

Everyone was happy except India. Pakistan, of course denies receiving any such goodies.

These denials are not taken seriously, even in the US. Islamabad has also denied purchasing the nuclear ring magnets even though the Chinese aye admitted selling them to promote "peaceful" nuclear cooperation.

Promoters of closer Pakistan China relations have suddenly been overcome by an attack of amnesia. The most notable sufferer is the US senator, Hank Brown. Last year, he pressed for the amendment that bears his name to allow $368 million of military equipment to be delivered to Pakistan.

Brown has told US newspapers the arms shipment "really is not related" to the nuclear programme. The senator needs a reality check. When the Brown amendment was being shoved down congress's throat by a tireless Robin Raphel, she had repeatedly promised that the Pakistanis were no longer in the business of sniffing around for nuclear spare parts and secrets.

The chairman of the house Asia-Pacific subcommittee Douglas Bereuter, went into painfully long explanations when asked if he was convinced of the sale of ring magnets to Islamabad.

The Central Intelligence Agency director, John Deutch has confirmed in a public testimony on Capitol Hill that the magnets were sold.

Bereuter, however, said "the evidence is strong but not sufficient" that the sale actually took place.

Perhaps Washington is waiting for the bill of lading. "There needs to be a measured response," he said. The decision will be political with a capital "P".

Brown, a tireless promoter of US business, promotes China's case in the debate that is tearing the administration from within. "Our objective is to find ways to be firm, to achieve our objectives on issues like nonproliferation, and at the same time, not to cut off your nose to spite your face."

Such an accommodating attitude was precisely what started and fed Pakistan's nuclear programme in the Eighties when US presidents routinely granted "certificates" to Islamabad. The certificates, stating Pakistan was not pursuing a nuclear weapons programme, allowed hundreds of millions in aid to flow in.

Washington's insistence that south Asia is the only place in the world likely to have a nuclear showdown does not fit in with its deliberate refusal to acknowledge Pakistan is improving its weapons pro gram me. The Pakistani camp in the Pentagon and the US state department regularly grants favours to Islamabad. At times, this is to simply pat the Pakistanis for trying to be a democracy. At others, it is to save the government of Benazir Bhutto.

The apparent schizophrenia is incomprehensible. In Washington, however, a justification can be found for every lapse in logic. And it is not only Pakistan to whom China is selling "dangerous" things. There is also Iran.

Tehran received cruise missiles from China and tested them in 1995. It bought components for ballistic missiles in the same year from China along, with chemical weapon precursors. That is a long list of misdeeds but the US has not found a way to respond.

The Chinese are selling sophisticated weapons systems to anyone who has the money. But is it a coincidence that most of the recipients happen to be India's neighbours? The Chinese are building a port in Myanmar [Burma] which experts believe is a military base. Chinese missiles in Tibet are already aimed at India.

Although India has not made official noises of protest over the Chinese nuclear sales to Pakistan, one hopes silent diplomacy is at work.

India: Satellite Launch Termed as 'Milestone' in Space Program

BK2103164396 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India achieved yet another milestone in its space program with the successful launching of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-D3, from the Shar Range in Shriharikota at about 1024 [0454 GMT] this morning. At the end of the 72-hour countdown, the four-stage rocket comprising two liquid-based and two solid-based ones ignited, burned, and separated as planned and ejected the satellite. PSLV-D3, the third and last in the developmental flight series, placed the second generation remote sensing satellite, IRS-P3, into a 817-km sunsynchronous orbit in about 18 minutes after liftoff with high precision.

The 939-km satellite is equipped with a wide field scanner, a modular optoelectronic scanner, an x-ray astronomy payload, and an AC Band antenna. On ejection, the satellite was tracked by the S Band station at Mauritius set up by ISRO [Indian Space Research Organization] for providing tracking and telemetry support to IRS-1A and IB satellites. It is also being tracked by stations at Lucknow, Bangalore, Moscow, and Belgium.

According to ISRO, all the systems and subsystems on board are healthy and functioning normally. The satellite will be declared operational in three weeks. It will provide additional data for crop condition assessment throughout the length and breadth of the country.

The president, the vice president, and the prime minister have congratulated the scientists and technologists for the successful launching of the PSLV-D3. In a message, Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma said this is a shining example of the pursuit of excellence and high achievement in the frontal areas of science and technology. Mr. K.R. Narayanan observed that it is a triumph of self-reliance in a highly advanced field of science and technology. Mr. Narasimha Rao in his message said it is testimony to the continuing success of the country's space program. The minister of state for science and technology, Mr. Bhuvanesh Chaturvedi, said the launch reaffirms our capability in both rocketry and satellite technology. The ISRO chairman, Dr. Kasturirangan, complimenting every member of the organization for the success, said it was a proud moment.

India: Official Says CTBT Without Primary Disarmament 'Unacceptable'

BK2203064996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has made it clear that any comprehensive test ban treaty [CTBT] without a commitment to halt upgradation of nuclear weapons is unacceptable to it. The foreign secretary, Mr. Salman Haider, said such a treaty void of disarmament can only be an arms control treaty designed to continue reliance on nuclear weapons by those who possess them. Addressing a plenary meeting of the disarmament conference in Geneva, he said India knows that nuclear weapons cannot be eliminated overnight, but in today's world conditions do exist for negotiations to begin for achieving the primary disarmament objective. Unwillingness to move in this direction raises doubts about the level of commitment to the disarmament agenda. He said countries which possess nuclear weapons appear bent on retaining them. He regretted that the opportunity available now has not been used to address the key issues involved in this exercise. He said a comprehensive test ban treaty should bring about a halt to the qualitative development of nuclear weapons, besides marking the first irreversible step toward genuine nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework. He said India will continue to make efforts in the coming months to ensure that the disarmament agenda is not lost in a purely nonproliferation exercise.

India: 'Fight Until the Last' for Favorable CTBT

BK2203110196 Madras THE HINDU in English 21 Mar 96 p 11

[Article by C. Raja Mohan: "India To Stick to Its Guns at CTBT Talks"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Foreign Secretary, Mr. Salman Haidar, will address on Thursday the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva that is negotiating a treaty to ban testing of nuclear weapons. Mr. Haidar is expected to reiterate the strong Indian position in favour of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) that leaves no loopholes for future nuclear weapon development by the great powers, and is linked to a time-bound framework for total nuclear disarmament.

The foreign secretary's trip to Geneva comes in the wake of intense efforts by the United States to wrap up the drafting of the CTBT by the end of June and make it available for signature by early October. The U.S. Secretary of State, Mr Warren Christopher, was earlier this week in Geneva pressing negotiators to complete work on the treaty. Mr. Christopher declared in Geneva that early completion of the CTBT is "one of our highest national strategic priorities."

The Conference is due to wind up the current phase of talks on the CTBT next week and resume negotiations in the middle of May. Mr. Haidar is expected to meet the hea-ds of key delegations to the CTBT talks and get an on-the-spot assessment of the state of play in Geneva.

Two Major Demands

India has placed two major demands in the CTBT negotiations. It has called for a tight definition of the scope of the treaty's primary obligation not to test nuclear weapons. But the U.S. and its allies are not prepared to accept such a rigorous definition. The five nuclear weapon powers are running a parallel discussion among themselves on clarifying permitted and prescribed nuclear weapons related activities under a CTBT.

While the U.S., Britain and France are agreed on a common approach, Russia and China appear still holding out, Moscow is yet to formally commit itself to a "zero-yield" treaty and Beijing wants peaceful nuclear explosions excluded from the treaty's ambit. Observers suggest the two countries may be holding out for a bilateral bargain with the U.S. The Clinton administration is said to be considering sharing its nuclear simulation technology, that would obviate the need for much of nuclear testing, with both Russia and China. The terms of such a deal are said to be under discussion.

India is also seeking to locate the CTBT in the general context of global disarmament, insisting on a time-bound framework for elimination of nuclear weapons as a precondition for the treaty to take effect. The U.S. and its allies have rejected a linkage between disarmament and the CTBT.

At a meeting with India and other Non-Aligned States in Geneva, Mr. Christopher warned that attempts to link the two would ensure that neither goal was achieved. The U.S. is reportedly putting pressure on the Non-Aligned countries in the Conference on Disarmament not to back India's proposals on disarmament.

Divergent Views

As the end game on the CTBT comes into view, there are voices in New Delhi demanding that the Indian Government declare the current CTBT talks a charade and distance itself from the negotiations. They point out that the nuclear weapon powers are unlikely to accept Indian proposals to make the treaty genuinely comprehensive and an instrument of global disarmament.

There is another view which proposes that India fight until the last to get a good CTBT. If such a treaty does not reflect India's interests, they argue, India can block the passage in the Conference. The Conference operates on the principle of consensus. There are others who argue that neither a strategy of walking out from the CTBT nor assuming the role of a wrecker would be in India's interest.

Mr. Haidar may not unveil a new negotiating strategy at Geneva. He is likely to stick to the current policy of a positive negotiating stances, and wait to see how things turn out in Geneva over the next few weeks.

India: Commentary Analyzes Country's Election Scenario

BK2203121996 Delhi All India Radio General Overseas Service in English 1010 GMT 22 Mar 96

[Commentary by political commentator S.C. Bhat]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Once again the people of India will go to the polls in April and May this year to elect a new Lok Sabha, the lower house of parliament. This will be the 11th time the adult franchise will be exercised since the Constitution was enforced in 1950 and the first election was held in 1952. From that time, every five years the people have chosen their own representatives and decided who should govern them. The world's largest democracy has an unblemished record of upholding its democratic tradition which only a few countries can equal and none can excel. The last elections in India were held in May and June 1991.

The new poll process begins with the filing of nominations from 27 March. The polling will be held in four phases on 27 April; 2, 7, and 21 May. On the last day, polling will take place only in three constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir. The counting will begin on 8 May and entire poll process will be completed by 14 May except for three seats of Kashmir. The results of 540 seats out of 543 elective seats would be known to the people by the end of 2d week of May. Elections will also be held simultaneously in six state assemblies.

What was significant in the announcement of the election commission was its decision to hold the Lok

Sabha polls in Jammu and Kashmir. Late last year, the commission had declined to hold the assembly elections in state on the grounds that the situation there was not conducive for elections. In view of the law and order situation, polling there for six seats will be held on two days — 7 May and 21 May. That the poll for the Lok Sabha is going to be held now in that state shows that the election commission is now convinced that there was considerable change in the ground situation and law and order situation has improved considerably for holding parliamentary elections. Since elections have been declared in the state, though only for Lok Sabha, it is extremely important that all the major players test their popularity at the hustings. Going by the mood of important militant leaders as well as leading political parties, it looks certain that the elections in the border state will turn out to be a genuine exercise of their franchise by the people.

The main parties competing for the people's choice in the 11th general elections are three: the ruling Congress, the Bharatiya Janata Party — BJP — and the third force represented by the National Front — NF — and the Left Front — LF — which are expected to go to the polls together. The Janata Dal which ruled the country for nearly a year during 1989-90 is the leading group in the National Front and the two Communist Parties — the CPI-M [Communist Party of India-Marxist] and the CPI are the main constituents of the Left Front.

The Congress has ruled India for some 44 years out of the nearly 49 years that India has been free. The people, however, rejected the Congress in 1977 when it lost to the newly formed Janata Party. Again in November 1989, the ruling Congress party lost to the Janata Dal and its allies in the National Front. On both occasions, the Congress bounced back into power when midterm elections were held. The BJP considered a rightist party is the second largest party in the outgoing Lok Sabha and its leader is recognized as the leader of the opposition. It has held power in a number of states, including the most populous Indian state of Uttar Pradesh and is currently in power in Gujarat, Rajasthan, and the capital city of Delhi apart from Maharashtra where it is in coalition with the regional party, the Shiv Sena. Of the third force, the Left Front is in power in West Bengal and Tripura and the Janata Dal is holding office in Bihar and Karnataka states.

The present Congress party government took office in June-July 1991 in peculiar circumstances, but has held the country together for five long years. It has introduced major economic changes and brought in the foreign investment in a big way. It has also other achievements to its credit in the internal and foreign spheres. But the real test is now whether the people hold the record to be worthy of a second term will be known when the ballot boxes more than a million of them are opened for three or four days from 8 May.

An Indian general election is a gigantic affair. Not only nearly 400 million people will exercise their franchise, but a large number of polling personnel and security personnel have to be on duty. The election commission, which is totally independent has to oversee the entire operation to ensure free and fair elections. There is no doubt that the outcome of the next elections will have a profound impact on the future shape of the country.

India: BSP Forges Electoral Alliance in Andhra Pradesh

BK2203105896 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Telugu Desam Party-Parvati group and Bahujan Samaj Party [BSP] have decided in principle to fight elections jointly in Andhra Pradesh in Lok Sabha polls. This was disclosed by the BSP leader, Mr. Kansi Ram, to an agency in New Delhi today.

Iran

Iran: Yazdi—Tehran May 'Retaliate' for German Warrant

LD2203113396 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran Provincial Network in Persian 0810 GMT 22 Mar 96

[Second Friday sermon by Ayatollah Mohammad Yazdi, head of the judiciary, at Tehran University — live]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. [passage omitted]

You have all heard that the German federal prosecutor has issued a warrant for our country's information minister. First of all, this is against all international laws and all legal procedures. This is very clear, and I do not even need to elaborate on it.

Second, I am surprised that a prosecutor in a certain country should decide to issue a verdict in absentia against someone else in a different country. We are also capable of doing the same. Right now, we have in our possession a number of files on famous world personalities from America, Europe, Asia, etc. If we wish, we can bring these dangerous files to the surface. We can put these before courts, which then might convict the said individuals in absentia. But this is not right and proper. [crowd chants in support of the revolution, condemning United States and Israel]

Did they not do enough injustice to this country during the reign of the tyrannical monarchy? Who committed all the injustice? The answer is that it was committed by the same people who managed the affairs of the old regime and are still holding key positions in many countries. We have files on all of them, and we can easily open these and then convict Mr. This and Mr. That in absentia. We can accompany this process with a campaign of propaganda aimed at world public opinion.

What is this new trend set by the German federal prosecutor? The argument about the international criminal courts is a separate thing altogether. As yet, we do not know what will become of the case of Serb war criminals in The Hague. However, what we do know is that according to the normal procedures governing all judicial organs the world over, the said trend [started by the Germans] is illegal and improper. The first consequence of such a trend would be that we too can respond in exactly the same way.

As the official in charge of the judicial apparatus, I would like to announce that if this issue remains unresolved, then we will have no choice but to retaliate. I declare here that we can do this without any difficulty whatsoever. But this would be wrong.

My other theory, which you might agree with, concerns the recent pressures by the arrogant governments of America and Israel. Whenever they see that we are moving forward according to logical and principled humanistic tenets derived from common international laws, and whenever they realize that our relations with all other countries — except two states — are developing and we are living properly on the basis of international norms, and finally whenever they sense that our relations with others are reaching a desirable stage, they try different ploys against us, because they feel that they cannot prevent us in any other way. You all know how they tried their luck with Russia, France, and indeed Germany. They tried to stop any country which wanted to have a dialogue with us, so as to weaken our links with others.

Fortunately, the majority of the world officials and statesmen are aware individuals who are well and truly familiar with the issues of their respective countries. They therefore do not blindly obey America.

I believe that the whole thing is due to pressures brought about by America and Israel. This is because they want to ... [changes thought]...this is because at present we have very good ties with Europe.

My belief is that the German statesmen will be able to resolve the issue, in the same way that similar issues were resolved in France. They should do so in order to prevent the creation of an undesirable state of affairs in the world. They should not give in to arrogance. We believe the whole thing is due to pressures by arrogance, and we furthermore think that the German statesmen will show as much wisdom as their French counterparts, and eventually the issue will be resolved.

The Sharm al-Shaykh summit in Egypt and the meeting that followed it this week in Washington are nothing but a new political game. Fighting terrorism! One is amazed at countries ...[changes thought] ... America recently lifted the veil behind which it was hiding. It announced officially, as we have all heard, that it had allocated $20 million to sabotage our country. This is not terrorism! And they want to hold another summit in Washington following the discussions at Sharm al-Shaykh of Egypt to say: Yes, well, one must fight terrorism.

You are the ones who should be fought first. You are on the top of the list of terrorists. Your past acts and your present ones show that ...[changes thought]... if one were to collect figures and statistics, they would show that you are the number one terrorist. What kind of talk is this? You want to organize a summit under the guise of fighting terrorism in order to isolate the Islamic Republic of Iran.

We are certain that neither the summit in Egypt nor the meeting in America will have any effect on these issues. The problem of Palestine and the Palestinians cannot be solved in this way. These discussions will not solve the problem, not until the rights of those who deserve them are restored. [crowd chants in support]

Concerning the threat of a radioactive leak in the region occupied by Israel at Dimona, which you heard about on the news, they have buried radioactive material from nuclear bombs and warheads and these days the danger of a radioactive leak there is being talked about. The Israelis — I am not going into figures here about the number of nuclear weapons and weapons of mass destruction that they have manufactured — are basically philanthropists, they follow guidelines on human rights and love humanity! And no one says a word about them. When we want to take a step toward an industry that would help our electricity generation, they make such a hue and cry.

The issue is clear to the world and as far as we are concerned, the issue is even clearer. Such a threat [of radioactive leaks], and even in America they talk about this, is a threat to humanity itself. How can they talk about human rights now when they don't value humanity at all? [passage omitted]

Iran: Paper Satirizes German Relationship to U.S., Israel

LD2103192496 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 17 Mar 96 p 2

[Article: "Conversation: Joining the Elite"]

[FBIS Translated Text] He said: Germany's supreme court has issued an arrest warrant for our country's information minister.

I said: But Germany claims that it no longer receives orders from outside.

He said: America and Israel are not outside Germany. Germany has recently become one of America's states and another occupied territory of the Zionists.

I said: Never mind. After all, by issuing this arrest warrant, the German Government has in fact sentenced itself to death by execution.

He asked: How is that?

I answered: Have you not heard the story of the jackal who became such good friends with a camel that decided to tie himself to the camel's tail?

Anyway, one day the camel ventured into a farm uninvited and was given a good hiding by the farmers. The poor terrified camel started to run away from the farmers' barrage of bullets and stones, but the stricken jackal could not keep up with the camel as his hands and legs were much shorter. Also he could not separate his destiny from that of the camel, because they were literally tied together.

Needless to say, the poor jackal began to damn his misfortune. He was after all at the receiving end of all the bullets, stones and pellets while he was being thrown about left, right, and center as he hung helplessly onto the tail of the fleeing camel.

"What's brought all this about then," asked one of his friends, passing by.

"This is what happens when you join the elite!!" answered the hapless jackal.

Iran: Paper Urges Germans To Check Court's 'Shameless Act'

LD2103170896 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 16 Mar 96 p 2

[Headline — "A Limit to Everything"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The German Federal Prosecutor's Office shamelessly confirmed Friday [15 March] that it had issued an arrest warrant for Iran's Information Minister 'Ali Fallahian.

In dealing with a criminal case, the court has changed the case into a platform for the political trial of a country because it is under the influence of Zionist circles and those who are dead against cordial relations between Tehran and Bonn.

In an unusual manner, the procedure of the court has been prolonged for several years. Moreover, all witnesses of the case are members of anti-Iran terrorist groups (masqueraded as political groups harboured by the West). These facts clearly indicate that the court is not competent in dealing with the case.

The Israeli influence on the court's procedures is clear to everyone. After the Sharm al-Shaykh summit failed to fulfil the desires of the Zionist regime, the court issued the warrant. This indicates that Zionists and certain circles in the U.S. that have a proven animosity against improvement of Tehran-Bonn relations are again at work.

Presently, due to losses in elections, the German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel is also trying to appease Zionist circles at home by adopting an anti-Iran stance. Whereas most world statesmen welcomed President Rafsanjani's stand on terrorism this week, in tune with the Zionists, Kinkel repeated what the U.S. State Department had said.

Although the court has issued the warrant under the influence of Zionist circles, the Iranian nation strongly calls on the German government to check the shameless act of the court and stop its nonsensical treatment as soon as possible if it is eager to maintain its cordial relations with Iran.

There is a limit to everything. If the Iranian nation has thus far tolerated the nonsensical behaviour of the court and other similar cases, it has been a gesture of goodwill, indicating Iran's will for the expansion of bilateral relations.

German officials should bear in mind that Iran is not dependent on any country. The U.S. used to be Iran's main ally and chief trading partner, but when the Iranian nation realised that Washington was going beyond a limit, it decided to kick the Yankees out. We are not remorseful for having relations severed with an arrogant partner who did not want to know her limit. Iranians will not compromise their national pride under any circumstances. We did not do so during the difficult years of the Iraqi-imposed war; we will not do so during peace time.

Iran: Commentary Says CIA Seeks 'Dismemberment' of Turkey

LD2103184496 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 18 Mar 96 p 3

[Commentary: "CIA Bent on Dismembering Turkey"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A report issued by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) indicates the possibility of Turkey disintegrating in the future. The report also spotlights other countries such as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

What factor has prompted the CIA to speak of the possibility of Turkey's disintegrating?

The answer to this question cannot be deduced from the overt news. On the surface, the U.S. has a base in Turkey and backs Turkey which is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Iraq and Iraqi Kurds are not powerful enough to dismember Turkey either. Iran enjoys cordial relations with Turkey, while Greece, being worried about possible inroad by Turkey, lacks the power to dismember the said country. So what factor has made the CIA speak of the likelihood of Turkey's disintegrating?

Without doubt, the CIA has access to classified information which enables it to arrive at this conclusion. This information pertains to the CIA's objectives and the U.S. activities in Turkey.

Washington's military presence in Turkey and the existence of U.S. bases there mar Turkey's stability and jeopardize its territorial integrity. The extensive U.S. military presence has escalated the likelihood of Turkey's dismemberment. In fact, the U.S. pursues the strategic objective of dismembering the Islamic countries, and Turkey is not an exception to this rule.

At times, the U.S. media present geographical maps which exclude Turkey's Kurdistan. There is news that the U.S. dispatches weapons, disguised as humanitarian aid, in trucks to Iraq's Kurdistan via Turkish soil. There weapons are used against Turkey.

The CIA's report on the possible disintegration of Turkey is a kneil of warning for the Turkish government and people to be cognizant and realize the inauspicious objectives and vile plots of the U.S. for the dismemberment of the Islamic country of Turkey and to take precautionary measures before it is too late.

Let us once again review the news item carried by the Islamic Republic of Iran's news agency (IRNA) (9th February 1996): "Based on a report by the U.S Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), India is among the countries that might be dismembered under specific conditions." According to the Press Trust of India (PTI), in this report - disclosed by U.S. Vice-President Al Gore - reference has also been made to Armenia, Benin, Bolivia, Brazil, the Central African Republic, Haiti, Kyrgyzstan, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Nigeria, Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Zambia as countries that might be dismembered in the future.

The aim behind releasing this report is to enable the CIA to oversee the affairs of the said countries to identify factors conducive to their instability and to inform the U.S. policy-makers of any possible development two years in advance.

Iran: U.S. Stand Against Iran 'More Serious Than Before'

LD2103165696 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 14 Mar 96 p 2

["Why the Sharm al-Shaykh Venue?" — by IRAN NEWS Political Desk in Tehran]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to the daily news bulletin AKHBAR, the original idea of organizing a conference in the Middle East took shape in the minds of Americans through Syrian insistence in the previous Maryland talks. The Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] struggle in the occupied territories, however, provided the pretext.

The Americans succeeded in Bosnia. Before that they had sent the Arabs to kiss the Israelis. They were not pleased with Syria and its influence in Lebanon. American President Bill Clinton, hot for confrontation with the Republicans, is in need of foreign policy successes before summer to convince the voters that he is deserving of a second term in the White House.

The U.S. is attempting to up the pressure by creating Sharm al-Shaykh to untie the knot in the Maryland talks and force Syria to make peace. If that is achieved by the participation of the Europeans, Clinton's hand would be strengthened against countries with an independent view toward the artificial peace process.

Libya reactions are being monitored. Sudan faces the possibility of an armed invasion from Egypt. The situation of Iran and Iraq are different. From the U.S. point of view, Saddam Husayn is neutered. Saddam Husayn has no place standing in regional public opinion nor in the world community. He is virtually a toothless tiger except against his own people.

From the U.S. point of view, Iran has the greatest potential to maintain an independent stand; it has a popular and revolutionary base. That is one reason why it has driven a wedge between Washington's relations with its European partners.

The Europeans do not endorse the U.S. view of Iran, both on the principle of denying creeping American encroachment in the international arena and the facts of the marketplace: They prefer to use the Iranian route for getting to Central Asia and into the warm waters of the world.

The U.S. is planning to convince Europe, however, that Iran is not suitable for investment unless it resumes its relations with Washington. If it does not intend to do so, it should be deemed as a factor threatening peace in the Middle East.

The U.S. is more serious than before however. Iran faces the challenge of employing the entirety of its diplomatic capacity to repel the consequences of the Sharm al-Shaykh charade.

Iran: TV Series Planned on U.S. 1980 Hostage Rescue Mission

LD2103193396 Tehran IRAN in Persian 18 Mar 96 p 16

[Report from the "Cultural Section": "America's Debacle in Tabas Will Be Portrayed in a Television Series"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The Shahed television group has started the filming of a television series called "The Brothers of the Sun," part of which tells the story of the American debacle in the Tabas desert [The U.S. aborted hostage rescue mission in April 1980].

This 26-part series, directed by Javad Shamaqdari, starts with the American aggression in Tabas and continues right through to the liberation of Khorramshahr and the oil war in the Persian Gulf. [passage omitted]

"The Brothers of the Sun" will probably be broadcast by the television's first network in Mehr 1378 [September-October 1999].

Iran: Paper Comments on Situation in Bahrain

NC2103195696 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 17 Mar 96 p 2

[Editorial: "The 'Parliament of the Streets' Makes Itself Heard in Bahrain"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In response to the bombing of two restaurants in Bahrain Thursday last week [14 March], resulting in the death of several people, anti-riot units have arrested more than 400 people around the country.

Since January this year, four bomb attacks have taken place in this tiny emirate which has been gripped by domestic violence since December 1994. The unrest began when opposition groups clamored for the restoration of Bahrain's Parliament which was suspended in 1975. To date more than 2,000 members of the opposition are in prison, including some wives and daughters of prominent opposition figures.

The actors in the ongoing crisis are, on the one side, the government which stubbornly resists the restoration of the Parliament and, on the other, the Bahraini people who insist that having a Parliament is a fundamental right of every nation.

When events rise to a crisis level, threatening to disrupt stability and the smooth functioning of a government, a third group comes in — opportunist elements who try to fish for advantages in troubled waters.

The main opposition group in Bahrain, the London-based Bahrain Freedom Movement, has condemned the bomb attacks as the work of mercenaries. The condemnation is a clear indication that the opposition does not support violence in punishing the guilty. No matter how critical a situation may be, there can be no place for violence to rule side by side with the law. Let justice take its course and punish the guilty.

Bahraini authorities, particularly its Ministry of Interior anti- riot squads, should exhaust every possible remedy for seeking redress of their grievances sans violence. The Bahraini amir has said that his country is "stable" and "secure." A secure government need not panic in times of emergency, and the essence of stability is the conviction that time-honored institutions are respected because the people are loyal to their rulers.

It comes as no surprise that the rulers in Bahrain are uneasy about their situation and point to outside elements as the mastermind. The people's demand is reasonable. The people know what they want but the authorities are not prepared to surrender some of their privileges.

Parliament is an age-old institution which, in history, has functioned to curb the excesses of tyrants since the days of Cromwell. With representatives accountable to the people abuses can be curbed with lightning speed.

However, the opposition should realize that the issue is not limited to the need for a restoration of the Parliament. The voice of the people may still be muffled, notwithstanding the presence of a Parliament, by opportunists who camouflage their real interests.

Parliament is one of the most democratic of institutions. To clamor for its restoration requires a firm commitment to peace, for it is a tested fact that a parliament cannot work alongside force and violence.

If the opposition resorts to violence to achieve its ends, it defeats the validity of its struggle. In addition, it will give opportunists a cause to tarnish their [the opposition's] image. On the other hand, by pursuing a peaceful struggle it lays down an example to the authorities that bloodletting is no way to rule a nation.

In a world shrinking with time and autocracies giving way to democratic institutions, it is high time the rulers of Bahrain consider the way they rule. Instead of pointing an accusing finger at outsiders, they would do better to listen to the "voice of reason." Democracy may not be acceptable to all but it is a way of life accepted by the majority. The collapse of communism is the most tangible evidence of this fact.

Persian Gulf littoral states, with their tremendous resources, require peace and tranquility more than other states. Investments will only flourish in an atmosphere of stability. And, needless to say, people are a country's best investment. It goes without saying that they must be guaranteed an atmosphere of peace and tranquility.

Iran: Russian Duma Official Says Ties With Muslim World No Threat to Russia

LD2203120096 Tehran IRNA in English 1026 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Moscow, March 22, IRNA — Russian political officials believe that establishment of ties with the Muslim world does not pose any threat to Russia, chairman of the Committee for International Affairs of the State Duma Vladimir Lukin told IRNA on Thursday [21 March].

Lukin said that Russian present policies were adopted in line with promotion of ties with Muslim countries.

He warned that certain foreign countries were trying to mar relations between Russia and the world Muslims in order to achieve their own pre-determined objectives.

The Russian legislation body official said that hundreds of books, including Russian version of the Holy Koran, had been published in Russia over recent years in order to offer clear views about Islam.

Moreover, he added that there were various faculties in Russia busy offering training courses on Islamic sciences.

Lukin said that Islam ranked second among five major religions in Russia which managed to win believers out of 176 nationalities residing in the country.

He added that Russian officials respect the rights of those believing in the divine religion of Islam.

Iran: Bosnian Cantonal Delegation Visits To Discuss Aid

AU2103212696 Sarajevo Radio Bosnia-Herzegovina Network in Serbo-Croatian 1800 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Translated Text] On the invitation of representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran in charge of relations with Bosnia-Herzegovina, a delegation from Una-Sana Canton, headed by Governor Mirsad Veladzic, visited this friendly country.

The goal of the visit was to establish aspects of aid and the inclusion of Iran's economy in the reconstruction of Una-Sana Canton. The delegation met with Iranian businessmen, whom they briefed on the economic potential of the Una-Sana Canton, as well as how to secure raw materials to ensure the speedy revival of the region's economy.

Iran: Hizballah Members Visit Iranian Newspaper Office

NC2103215896 Mashhad KHORASAN in Persian 5 Mar 96 p 12

[FBIS Translated Text] Three members of the Political Research and Investigation Center of the Lebanese Hizballah met the editor-in-chief of the KHORASAN newspaper. They were Dr. 'Ali Fayyaz, member of the Political Bureau and head of the Political Research and Investigation Center of the Hizballah in Lebanon; Ahmad Qasir, who is in charge of disseminating information; and Muhammad Khalil, who is in charge of relations. Also participating were the editor-in-chief and the technical director of KHORASAN.

Initially, Dr. 'Ali Fayyaz expressed his pleasure at the opportunity to have this meeting, adding: The Center of Political Research and Investigation in Lebanon is ready to send its monthly and annual reports to KHORASAN regarding various issues pertaining to the Middle East, and especially to Lebanon, the Zionist regime's provocations and aggression in the region, as well as the activities of the combatant groups in Lebanon and operations of the Palestinian groups inside occupied Palestine.

Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Ghazali, the director general of KHORASAN, also expressed pleasure at the meeting and welcomed the suggestion. He elaborated on the activities of the various departments of KHORASAN, saying: KHORASAN is one of the newspapers that has consistently been sensitive to Middle East problems, especially the situation in Lebanon and Palestine, and it has striven to present information on the region as part of its daily reports or regular analyses.

Answering a question, the chief of the Research and Investigation Center of the Lebanese Hizballah commented on the press activities of the Lebanese Shiites, the performance of the various other Shiites in that country, conditions in Beirut, and Shiite facilities in Lebanon. He said: The Lebanese Shiites are functioning in two groups—that is, the Amal and the Hizballah—and each of them have their own installations.

Speaking about the Amal in Lebanon, he said that it enjoys the support of Syria, the historic leadership of Musa Sadr, and an official role as an active Shiite group in government departments. It enjoys a relatively favorable position, despite which it has become a bureaucratic branch of the Lebanese Government. The Hizballah, on the other hand, does not have any role in the government but has a strong popular base. The true popular resistance and activities are in the hands of the Hizballah.

He stressed: The link with Amal and cohesiveness among the Shiites should continue. Regarding conditions in Beirut, he stressed: Inside Beirut and Lebanon, wherever there are Shiites, the Hizballah is in the forefront. At present it has no problems playing its popular role in Beirut.

He continued: Beirut has two sectors: in one of them, various groups are active, while in the other mostly the Shiites and the Hizballah operate. Even though the government is seeking to undermine the Hizballah's role in Beirut, no one is contemplating its elimination. The Hizballah has been performing well even in West Beirut. Regarding the organizational setup of the Shiites and their mode of communication, he said: Precise statistics or percentages of the official members in these organizations are not available. However, as for the Hizballah, it is continuing its popular mobilization activities.

He referred to the Lebanese Hizballah's sensitivity to Iranian issues, especially the elections to the Fifth Islamic Majles. He explained the Research and Investigation Center's system of disseminating information and its plans to establish links with the international information network in the near future. It is worth mentioning that the members of this center inspected the various departments of KHORASAN's office.

Iran: Habibi, Rafsanjani Condole Rowhani on Son's Death

LD2203103496 Tehran IRNA in English 0952 GMT 22 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, March 22, IRNA — President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani and first Vice-President Hasan Habibi sent separate condolence messages to Vice Speaker of Majles and Secretary General of Supreme National Security Council Hasan Rowhani on the death of his son Mohammad Rowhani. Both messages wished forgiveness for Rowhani's son before the Almighty God and patience for Rowhani and his family.

A memorial ceremony is to be held on the occasion at Martyr Motahhari Higher School on Sunday [24 March] by Hojjat ol-Eslam Rafsanjani.

Iran: Paper's Readers Vote Hamas' al-Shaqaqi 'Man of Year'

LD2103204596 Tehran IRAN in Persian 17 Mar 96 p 1

[Article: "Readers Vote al-Shaqaqi Man of the Year"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] In the month of Esfand this year [20 February - 19 March] the daily IRAN staff at the News and Social Events departments organized an opinion poll to identify the "outstanding personality" and "man of the year" as part of their scheduled agenda. The staff selected a group to conduct the opinion poll, which began its work in earnest. As a result Martyr Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi was voted by the readers as the non-Iranian "man of the year".

Dr. Fathi al-Shaqaqi [former leader of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas] was imprisoned by the Zionist regime on a number of occasions, and this year the elements of the same regime martyred him [in Malta].

During the opinion poll the readers also chose a heart surgeon as "Personality of the year." The surgeon, Dr. Mandegar, is the head of the Heart Department in Tehran's Shari'ati hospital. [passage omitted]

Iran: Paper Comments on Year's Performance, E-Mail Service

NC2103205696 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 18 Mar 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Year-End Chat"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] You are reading the last 1374 issue of the TEHRAN TIMES.

Having given appropriate coverage to every event, we are happy to put the hectic days of the current year behind us. We are proud of being the first newspaper to react to numerous events and to analyze their implications and consequences.

During every moment of the current year we spared no effort in depleting a clear picture of events for our readers. Frankly speaking, whenever the editorial board could not present a clear-cut view of developments, we did not hesitate to interview concerned personalities in order to bring you first-hand information.

A quick look at our editorials and articles during the past year clearly indicates we have always moved in step with developments, pioneered in reacting to them, and have not been behind them.

With the grace of the Almighty, we succeeded in setting up the TEHRAN TIMES electronic mail, thereby reducing geographical distance and time in reaching your homes and offices — four hours before the paper goes to press. We have even tried to save you time by sending our paper on a data-base e-mail.

Our editorial board relentlessly tried to provide you with a special issue on every suitable occasion or every holiday in order to prepare an opportunity for you to be with us during your leisure hours.

We have put many difficulties behind us with the grace of God and dedication to work. We are sure we will succeed in the future because of these two reasons.

It has been an honor to give first-hand information to our readers. Of course, some of our readers are in far distant lands; we communicate with them only through a common language. Nevertheless, we have great respect for them and this is why we have dedicated ourselves to the cause of improving the quality of our service to them. Undoubtedly, our readers are time-tested supporters: you have been a source of moral support for us in the paper's ups and downs.

We in return have expectations from our readers: do not hesitate to inform us of your suggestions and criticisms; from the paintings of your children to your political analyses and complaints; we will take them as love letters.

We are not sure that we have been able to fully communicate with our readers. We can increase the number of our friends through your friends.

Last but not least, our heartfelt congratulations to our readers on the eve of the new year. We wish you a very happy and prosperous year.

Iran: Paper Recommends Economic Flexibility in Coming Year

LD2103184696 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 17 Mar 96 p 2

[Editorial: "Logical Flexibility"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The year 1374 [Iranian year from 21 March 1995 to 19 March 1996] was marked by the economic stabilization policy which was enforced to stabilize the foreign currency's parity rate, maintain the value of the domestic currency, and solidify the country's economy.

This policy spurred sundry positive and negative impacts in different sectors of the country's economy. The policy was positive in the sense that it retained the value of the domestic currency, prevented speculation and improved investment. The policy was negative as it created tangles and a relative drop in non-oil exports and this drop affected the production sector.

To put it more clearly, non-oil exports were to amount to 5 bn [billion] dollars in 1374 but fell to $3.8 bn. This means continued dependence on oil revenues, a dependence which is contrary to the country's economic objectives and which creates a problem in production.

As economic officialdom put it, the policy of stabilizing the foreign currency rates is for various reasons preferable even if it creates tangles in the way of non-oil exports. This is completely true, but efforts should be made to minimize the adverse impacts of this policy on other sectors.

Unfortunately, the country's liquidity is channeled toward the non-productive sectors due to problems in production and exports. This brings about more than 50 per cent inflation.

Statistics released by the Central Bank of Iran (CBI) indicate that in the first nine months of the current Iranian calendar year, liquidity amounted to around 7.350 bn rials. If the said liquidity is not used in the productive sectors, it will cause greater inflation. And this means greater pressure on the people with low incomes and on wage earners.

Through the past year, the advantages and disadvantages of the economic stabilization policy were brought into the limelight. Now is the time to strive to eliminate the disadvantages to enhance the policy's effectiveness.

Many economic experts believe that the policies of stabilization and adjustment should be amalgamated to remedy the country's economy.

At any rate, the economic officialdom should adopt the policy and soundly implement it through principal and fundamental measures.

During the coming Iranian year, the frameworks of the existing policies should be maintained, while a logical flexibility should be adopted to resolve problems related to non-oil exports and foreign trade in an attempt to more speedily reduce dependence on oil incomes.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Spokesman Comments on U.S. Arms, PRC Nuclear Technology

BK2103144996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A Foreign Office spokesman has welcomed U.S. government's reported proposal to Congress to supply $368 million embargoed military equipment to Islamabad which it had paid for. During a briefing in Islambad today, he said we welcomed this as a positive step toward the implementation of Brown Amendment and doing away of inequity of the Pressler Law. The spokesman said President Bill Clinton had publicly admitted that United States treated Pakistan unfairly. The prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, during her U.S. visit last year had demanded that either Pakistan be supplied the embargoed defense equipment or the money be returned to it. When asked about the reports that U.S. decision to release the embargoed defense equipment was meant to extract a commitment from Pakistan for not upgrading its nuclear program, the spokesman assured that Pakistan has not compromised in any manner on its principled position.

He said Islamabad has not imported any weapon-related nuclear technology from Beijing. He said there have been imports from China for the Chashma nuclear power plant which is fully safeguarded and regularized by International Atomic Energy Agency.

Pakistan: Nawaz Meets Russian, Canadian Envoys in Islamabad

BK2103110396 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 21 Mar 96 p 1

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Islamabad — The Russian and Canadian envoys to Pakistan separately called on Leader of the Opposition and President Pakistan Muslim League [PML] (N) Mian Mohammad Nawaz Sharif here Wednesday.

Russian Ambassador Yakunin and Canadian High Commissioner Bean Chenain discussed with Nawaz matters of bilateral interest.

The opposition leader told them about India's continuing repression of the Kashmiris in the occupied valley. He also briefed them on Pakistan's security concerns in view of India's threatening missile and nuclear programme.

PML leaders Sartaj Aziz and Shujaat Hussain were also present.

Pakistan: Leghari Discusses Regional Peace With Mauritius President

BK2103160796 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has reiterated that Pakistan wants peace and stability in the region and would always play a positive role to achieve these goals. The president was talking to the visiting president of Mauritius, Mr. Cassam Uteem, who called on him at the Aiwan-i-Sadar [President House] in Islamabad today. Discussing the overall situation in the region, President Leghari told the distinguished guest that Indian nuclear and missile programs are posing threat to the peace and further aggravating tension in the whole region. President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari pointed that Pakistan cannot ignore its security interests. He hoped that countries like Mauritius would convince India for an early and peaceful solution of the Kashmir problem in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations. The president said if Kashmir issue is resolved amicably, it could go a long way for betterment of the socioeconomic development of the people of the region. He said peace would also new vistas of development directly affecting the people.

President Cassam Uteem while fully appreciating President Leghari's point of view said his country wants to further expand trade and economic links with Pakistan.

President of Mauritius, Mr. Cassam Uteem, has said his country wants peace in the Indian ocean and it remains the policy of his government to encourage economic cooperation among those states who live in the Indian ocean for the promotion of peace. Speaking at a luncheon hosted in his honor by the speaker of the National Assembly, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, President Cassam Uteem said being a state from the Indian ocean, his country wants to strengthen its relations with Pakistan in all the spheres. He said Mauritius is a multireligious country and deeply believes in regional peace. Earlier, speaking on the occasion, speaker Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani said a large number of people of Pakistani origin as well as Muslim community live in Mauritius. He said this interaction has brought Pakistan and Mauritius closer. Mr. Yusuf Raza Gilani said it remains the policy of Pakistan to forge a peaceful solution of Kashmir problem.

Earlier, a very warm welcome was accorded to the president of Mauritius at a ceremony held at the Aiwan-i-Sadar today. [passage omitted]

Pakistan: Official Details Performance of National Economy

BK2203114996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The adviser to the prime minister on finance and economic affairs, Mr. V.A. Jaffery, said the country is poised to achieve a growth rate of 6.5 percent during the current financial year. He was talking to financial writers in Islamabad this afternoon. He said 10 million bales of cotton have already reached the market as a result of good cotton crop this year. The prevailing rate of inflation is 9.5 percent as against 13.5 percent last year. Referring to tax collection figures, he said a total of over 156 billion rupees were collected during the first eight months of the current fiscal year showing an increase of 17 percent over last year's figures. About export performance, Mr. V.A. Jaffery pointed out that the country's exports registered an increase of 2.2 percent in dollar terms over the figures of the previous year during the past eight months. Imports came down to 18 percent from 24 percent in this period. He was hopeful that as a result of various measures taken by the government, budgetary deficit would come down to 5 percent by the end of the current financial year.

Pakistan: Spokesman Rejects Indian Bid for Elections in Kashmir

BK2103113396 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 21 Mar 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Pakistan has rejected the Indian plan to hold elections for six Lok Sabha seats in occupied Kashmir and called on New Delhi to allow the people of that state to exercise their right to self-determination according to UN resolution. A Foreign Office spokesman commenting on the Indian election commission's announcement to hold elections in occupied Kashmir on 21 May next said the All Parties Hurriyat Conference [APHC] comprising true representatives of Kashmiri people have rejected the Indian government's election plan. He pointed out that the APHC has unequivocally stated that elections cannot be a substitute for a UN supervised plebiscite, a right pledged by UN to Kashmiri people. The spokesman said that any attempt to impose elections will further aggravate tension in occupied Kashmir. The spokesman asked India to hold a meaningful dialogue with Pakistan on Kashmir dispute instead of going for another farcical election. He said talks between Pakistan and India will be meaningful, if they discuss the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir. He said Pakistan has sent nonpapers to India and wanted New Delhi to agree on the nonpapers but, the Indians have rejected them.

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